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The adult illustrated fantasy magazine
November 1985
Interview with director John Carpenter!
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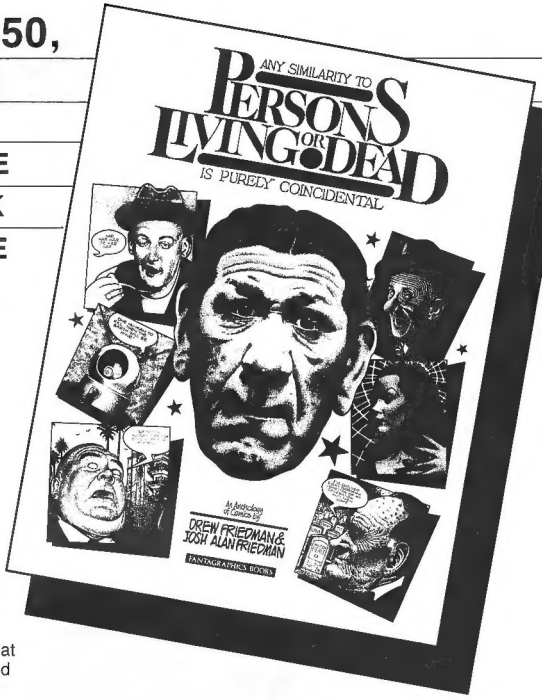
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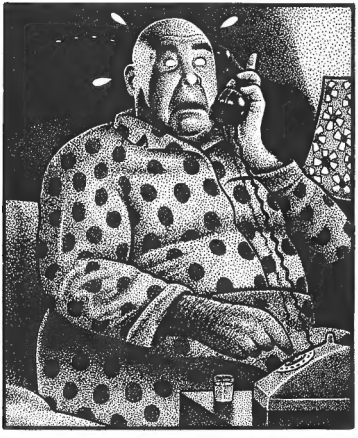

I stand in awe of Drew Friedman's technique and the certain flavor of sad old America he captures. He's the Crumb of the '80s. I love his stuff. . . He's such a wacko!

—R. Crumb

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dossier

Stranger Than Jarmusch

What's this? An American "art movie" with quirky characters, an engaging story line, and—here's the real heresy—*laughs*? Obviously, something's wrong here . . . .

Fact is, something's *right* with writer/director **Jim Jarmusch**'s dryly amusing ***Stranger Than Paradise***, a stylized bit of subversive entertainment that emerged buzzingly from 1984's Cannes, Toronto, and New York film festivals to become last winter's underground smasheroonie (in reality lingo: multi-month engagements at the handful of modest-sized alternative venues in North America, and maybe a new pair of black sneakers for Jarmusch; no stretch limos and massive nose habits just yet).

But the point to be taken here is the rarity of *Stranger*'s appealing mix of styles and sensibilities, and what that says about the determinedly market-structured philosophy currently Siegheiling the American filmmaking biz. Conventional wisdom seems to sanction mainstream films tainted with the dreaded *art* (as long as they're brought in on budget and make a profit), but nixes the vice versa: an art film that aspires to accessibility tempts contempt. But none of that dinksquat reasoning for Jarmusch, who says, "There can and should be a new American cinema that takes its influences equally from Hollywood and from Japan, or Europe, or other more formal, more artistic cinema."

Which is precisely why *Stranger Than Paradise* is such a watchable film—Godardian formalism unashamedly drinks from the same bag-covered bottle as broad Honeymoonery. The actual story ain't really much: a couple of NYC lowlifes, played with mannered vacuity by musicians John Lurie and Richard Edson, have their well-ordered lives of Bud-guzzling, tube-staring, and odds-playing disrupted by the arrival of Lurie's cousin (Eszter Balint) from Budapest. She stays in Lurie's squalid one-room apartment for a short while before moving off to Aunt Lettie's in Cleveland, where the two guys drive off to see her in a borrowed car a year later. A pathetic flicker of warmth develops among the three, but like the other human relationships in the film it remains unconsummated, just beyond the lame characters' fumbling grasps. As Jarmusch puts it, "It's funny, but it's also sad—without being emotionally manipulating." The big surprise is Edson, who has been kicking around the NYC music scene for four or five years (drumming with such bands as Sonic Youth and, currently, Konk). Here he pulls off a superbly understated Art Carney/Robert De Niro quasi-comic bozo, tossing out several killer triple takes. (He's since turned up in *Desperately Seeking Susan* and the "Smuggler's Blues" episode of *Miami Vice*.)

Jarmusch also has been busy since *Stranger*—directing the promo for the Talking Heads U.K. single "The Lady Don't Mind" (not yet released here), acting as camera operator and visual consultant for roommate Sara Driver's *Year of the Dog*, and planning his next feature, *Down by Law*, set to begin shooting next month in New Orleans with Lurie, Tom Waits, and a young Italian comedian named Roberto Benigni.

Like his film, Jarmusch himself is quietly thoughtful (without being pretentious), studied (without being self-important), and not above cracking his level, Midwestern demeanor with a sly grin. He's a tall, lanky guy, stick-limbed and big-handed, with Warhol-colored hair pushed up and back in a modified fifties do. Other endeavors have vied for his attention, like prose writing (he's got a B.A. in literature from Columbia) and rock 'n' rolling (a not-so-bad band called the Del-Byzanteens, recorded by Beggars Banquet in the U.K., now dormant), but found the former unsatisfying ("too isolated") and the latter too demanding of his time ("film is my first commitment"—though more vinyl is forthcoming from the Del-Byzanteens as well as a studio collaboration with Edson). We sat and talked in his Little Italy apartment for a couple of hours, while a geek from the *Washington Post* hovered on the periphery, and Sara Driver fielded a constant barrage of phone calls. Jarmusch appeared unfazed by it all.

—Lou Stathis

HM: You started out adulthood as a writer—what turned you toward filmmaking?

JJ: Well, this sounds like a cliché, but while I was studying in Paris I went to the Cinémathèque—and suddenly, everything I'd read or heard about in film was there for me to see. That was like an incredible new world for me, seeing films—even American films, like a retrospective of Sam Fuller, that I'd only seen a few of on late-night TV. And after seeing a lot of films my writing started to get more visual. But for me, cinema is the most beautiful form because it incorporates everything—painting, movement, music, editing, acting, writing, design. Everything. There are so many levels to it, and you're working with so many people. I like exchanging ideas with people, and writing just seemed too isolated.

HM: Isolated in the creative process, or once the product is dispersed?

JJ: More once it gets dispersed. A lot of filmmaking is working alone—especially in the editing room or when you're writing the script. But once you've done the writing, it seems like such an insular little world. I was part of a group of writers that was shipped around to read at different universities on the East Coast,

and there was just something missing from that way of connecting with people, not ever really knowing if you were connecting or not. With a film, you can go and see the audience, and feel it. They hate it or they like it, and you can sense that. I think I need that contact with people; I'm not sure why. I still do write, but I don't do much with it. I read a lot, and writers are a real influence on the way that I think, but it's not something I feel I could do, spend my life writing things and not knowing really what people were feeling about it.

HM: I was really impressed with the weird narrative structure of *Strangers*—it was so effective in an offhand kind of way. So many goddamn filmmakers today seem incapable of telling coherent stories.

JJ: Yeah, I'm real obsessed with narrative in films, and my intention is to work with stories—new forms of narrative. I think there are more variations in the way you tell a story than there are in the story line itself. Storytelling is the oldest form of literature, and I think you learn more about yourself from reading a chain of events that happens to someone else.

HM: How's that?

JJ: It lets fantasy enter into it. It doesn't have to be unreal fantasy—even in something realistic, like Balzac, an alternative world is being created, and you're being allowed to enter into it. No matter how precise or naturalistic it is, it's still not real. And it's the same in film . . . . I love Balzac, for example, because of the sense of detail in his writing. You can become so involved in the little details of his characters' lives . . . they're so real it's as if you're moving through their lives with them. I really like that—I really like stories. I have a hard time with films that don't tell stories.

I also have a hard time with films that tell stories that are completely predictable, both in the story itself and the style in which it's told. In *Strangers*, I used this three-part structure—not a triptych, but kind of three chapters that don't really follow. And there is no real conflict in the traditional dramatic sense, and no real resolution. Just sort of unpredictable little vignettes that are in sequence and therefore make a story.

HM: Yeah, but everything hangs together, and the relationship *does* develop. For all the film's apparent choppiness—the way black leader is inserted between each scene—there is still a narrative drive to it. It surprised me, because according to all my own rules, I should've *hated* it. Normally, devices like those blackouts just piss the hell out of me. But once I got into the rhythm, I sorta relaxed and accepted it.

JJ: Yeah, it takes a while. I think, though, that the black spaces really are a contradiction, because formally they cause a separation—I mean, they're put in there to separate scenes. But essentially, as the film progresses, I think in a contradictory way they become connective instead of separating. I think they allow you to connect feelings for each scene with the next one, because you have a moment there that allows you to connect rather than separate. That's what I *hope* works. A lot of people do find it annoying for the first fifteen minutes or so . . . .

HM: Yeah, it takes time to gather some momentum; for a while there it looks as if it's not going anywhere, just meandering . . .

JJ: Like some existential art film.

HM: Yeah, like a high school kid making Camus or something.

JJ: I beg your pardon. [Laughter.] Yeah, I agree, but you have to be patient with things that build. That's true of great literature, too.

HM: Do you think audiences have that sort of patience anymore?

JJ: In America much less so than in Europe. I think the average American's attention span is about a minute and a half.

HM: I know mine certainly is. I've been totally ruined by massive doses of TV.

JJ: It seems like that's what we're used to. We've become adjusted to the language of television, the way it's cut and put together. I think that's too bad, because that isn't the only language of film—there's so much more.■

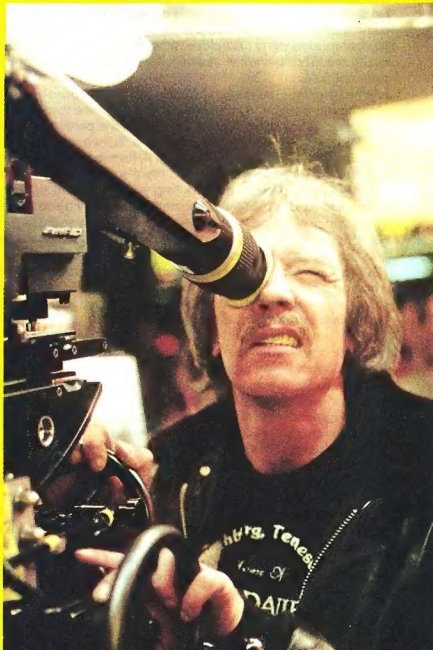
Escape from Hollywood: John Carpenter

In 1978 a low-budget, independently made horror movie crept into the nation's theaters, forever altering the notion that the genre was the exclusive domain of cheap exploitation fare. The film was *Halloween* and, with a gross of $50 million to its credit, it became not only a cult favorite and the toast of the critical establishment, but the most successful independent film of all time. It also made its director, **John Carpenter**, a household name.

Now thirty-seven, Carpenter has more than fulfilled the promise embedded in his early work. In the seven pictures he made after *Dark Star*, a sci-fi comic-horror fantasy about a creature from outer space terrorizing a group of astronauts on a spaceship (certainly the inspiration for *Alien*), he explored the action-adventure genre (*Assault on Precinct 13*, *Escape from New York*), the ghost story (*The Fog*), sf (*Starman*), and added more to the horror field than any other director with such efforts as *Christine* and *The Thing*.

With his fluid camera, larger-than-life heroes, and impeccable timing, Carpenter never failed to please the audience—most notably, with his own brand of humor and his abstinence from excessive gore. The only exception, *The Thing*, ended up a bomb.

Reclusive, shy, friendly, articulate, Carpenter, in the words of Kurt Russell, his star in *Elvis*, *The Thing*, and *Escape from New*



York, "is a guy you can't put a finger on, and you just can't help liking him right away. I did. He has a great eye and has absolutely no fear."

Whether writing his own scripts or working with other writers (such as Stephen King on *Christine*), Carpenter has never failed to explore evil. But in his most recent film, *Starman*, which, like *E.T.*, is about an extraterrestrial who is lost on earth, there is no evil. Although pursued by scientists, Jeff Bridges as the Starman is basically involved with a pretty woman who shares his journey. Carpenter wanted to "make a fairy tale rather than a sci-fi film," and feels it is closer in spirit to *The Wizard of Oz* and *It Happened One Night* than to *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Next for Carpenter is *Armed and Dangerous*, a comedy about security guards starring Dan Aykroyd and John Candy. The man clearly is averse to repeating himself.

—Dan Yakir

Heavy Metal: With the exception of *Starman*, all your films deal with evil, but you never give this evil a human face. Why? It seems to me that the human mind is more evil than anything. . . .

John Carpenter: I don't think that human villains are as frightening as an "it," which in a film like *Halloween* is human yet isn't. I dehumanize the villains in my films, strip them of motivation and character and make them all the more frightening. Even when the villains are human, as in *Assault on Precinct 13*, they're faceless. It's a youth gang that forms one unit. We don't get to know and understand them. They're just evil.

HM: Is it because once you relate to what the evil is, you're prone to start making excuses for it?

JC: That's true. You get to know them and they become less frightening. If they remain faceless, you're *forced* to identify with the victims. Imagine a real-life situation in which someone is trying to break into your apartment and you have no idea who he is. All you know is that there's someone out there and he's coming after you. To me, that's what's frightening. Now, they do say that most murders take place within the home, but that doesn't terrify me. That's another movie and it's a sad one. A family drama.

What frightens me is what I cannot see. If somebody you love plans to murder you, if you can see his face, it seems to me that you would be able to see what he's up to. The personal contact gives you a clue, something to hang onto. But when it's faceless, it becomes the essence of paranoia. A formless, horrible thing is out there, trying to get you, and there's no escape. You may be able to talk a friend out of killing you, by reminding him of your past friendship, but when something like the Fog comes out of the water with one intention—to kill—what do you do?

HM: Most of your films take place in enclosed, isolated spaces, in a claustrophobic environment. Why?

JC: That comes from feelings in me and also from Howard Hawks, who had a great influence on me. In *To Have and Have Not*, he shows people in a hotel, and in *Only Angels Have Wings*, they're inside, in a bar, while outside there's the darkness of evil which they will have to confront.

HM: You say this kind of atmosphere comes out of your own feelings. What kind of feelings?

JC: Loneliness. I was trapped in my own mind. I was an only child and was very lonely and to combat that loneliness I fantasized about the films that I wanted to make.

HM: You have worked in many different genres—sf, horror, action-adventure. . . . Which one allows you to express your view of the world to the fullest?

JC: All of them. I'd love to do a Western, and I have a project named *El Diablo*. Actually, I see *Assault on Precinct 13* as a Western, a sort of remake of *Rio Bravo*. And I love gangster movies, war movies, love stories, comedies. . . . One day I'll do something that doesn't relate to the 1950s [*The Fog*, *The Thing*] or the 1960s [*Halloween*] and doesn't go back to my childhood and won't be genre at all. And I'll fail miserably and go back to genre [laughs].

HM: There's an adolescent streak in all your films. Do you still feel like one?

JC: I'm an adolescent because I choose to do a certain kind of film. Movies were most effective to me when I was an adolescent. I had a sense of wonder about them. I wasn't particularly jaded about life yet. And I'd like to make films that would appeal not only to an adolescent, but to the child in all of us.

HM: Which is why you deal with fantasy?

JC: I don't want to make films about reality. You can see that standing in line at the theater. I prefer to stylize. When I was a kid, I used to go to county fairs that had a haunted house—you'd go down a little tunnel and things would jump out and grab you and you'd jump and scream. That's what I wanted to do in *Halloween*. Put the audience in that haunted house.

HM: Audience manipulation . . .

JC: Yes, but there's a lot of fun in these scenes. They aren't awful. You smile when you remember them. If it's very gory, it's no fun. In *Halloween*, you don't really see anybody get hurt. You imagine it. What I do to your imagination is more important. You can make up more horrible things in your mind than I can ever show on the screen.

HM: You've worked for television. Did you find that the medium lends itself more to audience manipulation?

JC: Not at all. I found it very difficult to work in television, and I don't plan to do it again. There's never enough time. There's a great deal of censorship. And it's a small screen. If you can get up, grab a beer, and come back, the magic is broken. A TV set is part of the furniture. It lacks the ritual that moviegoing demands.

I was very disappointed with *Elvis*. I didn't have a final cut on it and I didn't care for the music either. I was a great fan of Elvis, but the picture didn't work. I was more pleased with *Someone's Watching Me*. That one is almost like *Dial M for Murder*—a white-telephone thriller.

HM: Hitchcock obviously influenced you. What other influences besides Hawks do you acknowledge?

JC: I consider Welles, Ford, Hawks, and Hitchcock to be the masters of the cinema. From each of them there's something different to learn. Hitchcock's strength was montage and suspense. You have to study him to see what he did well, and what he did wrong—but I won't say what that was. But I prefer Buñuel's humor to that of Hitchcock. My own humor tends to go more in his direction. I loved *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *The Phantom of Liberty*, *That Obscure Object of Desire*. I'd call my own humor absurdist too. Or maybe I should say "hillbilly humor," since I was born in Kentucky.

HM: What prompted you to do a remake of *The Thing*?

JC: The chance to go to the original story, John W. Campbell's "Who Goes There?" In his production, Hawks eliminated the real nature of the monster and did something else with the material. What Hawks did was make the first monster-from-outer-space movie, the first to show a confrontation between the military and the scientists. It has always been one of my favorite movies, but I wanted to do it the way it was written.

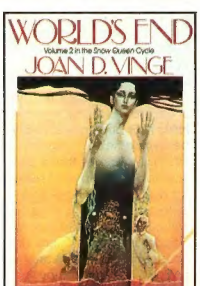
HM: Very much in the vein of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Alien*—the loss of identity.

JC: Yes. But the significance of it all—social or whatever—is just a by-product. The main thing is to tell a story and elicit an emotional response from the audience.

HM: And the response has nothing to do with credibility. I'm not speaking about the premise, say, of a murderous fog, but of details within that premise. For example, how does the creature in *Halloween* know how to drive after being in a mental institution for fifteen years? Or how does he turn from a psycho to an "it"?

JC: Look, if I were to be really logical, I don't think I would have done any of those films. They're all illogical in their essence. Hitchcock was always criticized for being illogical. But the films work. And as I said, reality isn't my bag. ■

Vinge Talks Back



Women hit the professional science fiction scene like gangbusters in the middle seventies, and **Joan D. Vinge** was leader of the pack. "The Tin Soldier," her first story, was bought by Damon Knight for *Orbit 14*. It was a romance between a retired cyborg-soldier named Maris and Brandy, a space-faring woman. Their relationship developed along extended lifelines, resonating to Andersen's fairy tale of the same title and a pop ballad called "Brandy."

Ben Bova bought Vinge's "Media Man" for *Analog* because of the story's "solid scientific background." In 1977 Bova published an all-women's issue to celebrate that women writing science fiction was a fact of life. The issue's lead title by Vinge, "Eyes of Amber," won a Hugo in 1979. Her novel, *The Snow Queen*, brought her another Hugo in 1982.

Vinge's works are remarkable not only for their psychologically complex characters but for their solid, well-paced plots and realistic backgrounds, as in *Outcasts of Heaven's Belt*, which is set in asteroid societies where the closed-system technology is running down.

In Vinge's universes there's no superhuman savior, but the actions chosen by individuals make a degree of difference for good or evil. Exploitation and violence are facts of life, but not endorsed. Paranormal abilities and mythological themes in novels like *Psion* and *World's End* work because they intersect with love and honor, other irrational facts of life.

By the eighties several publishing lines and magazines specializing in science fiction and fantasy were edited by women. Fantasy made the bestseller lists. Bova wrote, in the introduction to Vinge's collection of short fiction, *Eyes of Amber*, that his all-women's issue of *Analog* got a reaction from "some of the more frightened males predicting the end of the world because we had given in to the women's movement."

Reagan got elected twice, making macho and reaction of all kinds fashionable. "Fantasy" was the rally word for an anti-woman backlash. Vinge, as leader of the pack, got hit by the mudslingers. She was called a "cancer" and a "pollution" in science fiction, even though her technology is researched and carefully thought through. It's a baroque situation for a writer who cares deeply about the field.

Vinge's personal life went through changes. She got divorced and moved from California to New York. She married science-fiction editor Jim Frenkel, and they started a family. She wrote movie novelizations, including *Return of the Jedi*, *The Dune Storybook*, *Ladyhawke* (about this title she says, "Shakespeare wouldn't have written it, but he'd have enjoyed it"), and *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. She published two novels, *Psion* and *World's End*, and another collection of short fiction, *Phoenix in the Ashes*.

America's social fabric changes rapidly, and Vinge, an American realist, has always dealt with it and will continue to do so. She's another fact of life in science fiction.

—Constance Ash

Heavy Metal: Around the time you received a Hugo for *The Snow Queen* you experienced a lot of changes all at once.

Joan Vinge: If I had taken a stress test my quotient would have shot right off the scale. Getting over the grief of a divorce. It seems that since I left California life has been insane. It's the dislocation of space—maybe I didn't belong here, this wasn't my house, feeling that one day I'd shape up and go back to California. Getting to know a new person, getting pregnant. But I've lost a lot of that feeling now.

HM: Would you say there was a big change in science fiction too? One of them being a backlash against women in the field?

JV: Yes. And the belief that anything that women write or do is fantasy. All that trash about the science in *The Snow Queen* not being science.

HM: Why do you think that is?

JV: When I came into the field, it was a very open period, just like the society itself. We'd gone past the legacy of the sixties, and then so many women entered the field in the seventies. Now there's been a crest and a whole new generation of writers. There are still many women writing, and a lot of new names, doing good work. But most of them aren't writing science fiction, which is surprising to me. That could be called a backlash.

Most of the women of my generation writing science fiction would call themselves feminists. I think so many women began writing science fiction because of the women's movement. I think feminism naturally appeals to women who like science fiction. It makes you look at things from another point of view. Once people who entertain different points of view begin reading science fiction they're hooked. When the women's movement came along a lot of women thought, "Hey, I like this and I want to write it—and I can." And they did.

HM: It's tempting to see a cause-and-effect relationship between *The Snow Queen*'s Hugo and all that stuff about fantasy being a pollution of science fiction.

JV: There seems to be a certain school of male chauvinism—the Brits started that. I read some reviews by some of those charming people that talked about how *The Snow Queen* was full of mythology—therefore, not meaningful. Only science is meaningful. All those people who put down the fantasy element in my work forget that I was once the token hard-science female writer in *Analog* magazine. And they ignore *Outcasts of Heaven's Belt*.

HM: But if *The Snow Queen* is meaningless because of the fantasy, why is the *Helliconia* cycle by Brian Aldiss, which has fantasy in it too, not meaningless?

JV: Because *Helliconia*'s written by a man. . . . There's an interesting essay by George R.R. Martin about mingling science and fantasy. It appeared with Vernor Vinge's [Joan's first husband] story, "True Names." Vernor's story is a high-tech computer story,

but it's also a Dungeons and Dragons fantasy. The computer people went ape for it. George said he felt that if you combined science fiction and fantasy or myth, you got a stronger story. I haven't thought of this before, but people who read one frequently read the other, and I do form a spectrum that meets in the middle. The techie people still like to deny that the one has anything to do with the other. But that's the way the human mind works—making images out of what's important to it. That's what mythology is all about. To deny this is rank stupidity, like believing in the Aryan myth.

HM: Do you think that the Great American Novel, another mythical beast, might be a science-fiction novel?

JV: That's what I often say, especially when speaking at colleges. That's one of the things I love about the field, the room to experiment, study life in the micro- and macrocosm.

HM: What do you think it would need to make it work? Would it have to be set in the future?

JV: For me, probably. I like the freedom of places that are not my own environment, my own situations. For me it would have to be vastly world-building, with a lot of societies interacting, and cover a lot of different areas of human experience. It would have to work with the possibilities of technology as well as social aspects. Technology fascinates me; I like the idea of the future. I'm not afraid of machines and hard facts. I've always been happy to take things apart and am not afraid to put them back together.

HM: Your work seems full of common sense without stodginess, and it isn't a pornography of violence either.

JV: Like a lot of that stuff that started in the middle seventies. Both angry women and vicious men wrote about the brutalization of women at the same time. That's the difficulty of my own position as a woman. I don't want to believe that half the world is my enemy. But when it's good and vivid I get completely sucked into it and it hangs around me like a shroud. I'm not a goody-two-shoes who doesn't recognize evil and ugliness.

HM: *Psion* has some terrible things.

JV: *Psion* was something that I started writing as a kid. I couldn't get the characters out of my head. Originally it was a sort of adventure story, but dark.

HM: The undercity out of which Cat comes is so vivid, and horrible.

JV: That place haunts me still. Fortunately I don't dream about it. Going into New York City on the train—that last ten minutes underground strike me as very much like that vast underworld.

HM: Your audience is really curious as to what you're going to be writing next.

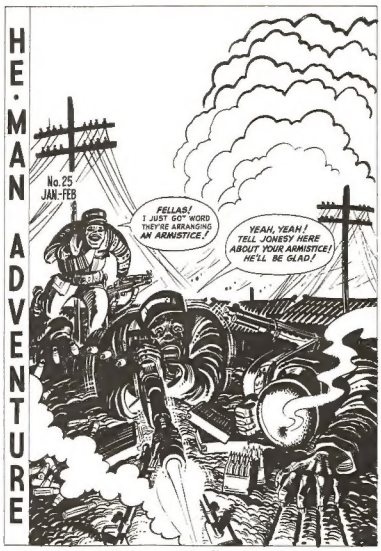
JV: I'm in one of those double binds. If I'm going to have any time to write I have to have day care. So I have to write to pay for day care so I have time to write. I'm really glad to be having children, but with a child around things get so fragmented. But without a family, life would be empty of some of the most significant elements. There are times, with these movie novelizations, which are done on a very tight deadline, that I wish for the peace of being a happy suburban housewife, being able to take my kid to the zoo. But at the same time, if I tried that for very long I'd go crazy. It's like those matchbook covers that ask, "Do you have the restless urge to create?"■

The Kurtzman Cometh

It would be difficult to overstate **Harvey Kurtzman**'s contributions to visual satire and comic-book storytelling. Kurtzman's *Mad*, which he created in the mid-fifties, is an acknowledged classic, one of the most original and influential humor magazines of the twentieth century. In addition to *Mad*, Kurtzman's other humor magazines, *Humbug*, *Trump*, and *Help*, and "Little Annie Fannie," the adult comic strip Kurtzman and Will Elder created for *Playboy*, have had a profound effect on American humor, not just in comics, but also in the areas of prose, radio, and film.

As of this writing, Kurtzman continues to produce "Little Annie Fannie" and is embarking on *Nuts*, a new series of humor books for young people. Kurtzman has also come full circle with his own creation, *Mad*. Following the retirement of Al Feldstein, who edited *Mad* from the time of Kurtzman's departure in the fifties until 1984, Harvey Kurtzman is again writing and drawing for *Mad*.

—S.C. Ringgenberg


HE-MAN ADVENTURE
No. 25
JAN.-FEB
FELLAS! I JUST GOT WORD THEY'RE ARRANGING AN ARMISTICE!
YEAH, YEAH! TELL JONESY HERE ABOUT YOUR ARMISTICE! HE'LL BE GLAD!

Heavy Metal: How serious about comics were you as a kid?

Harvey Kurtzman: I was always serious about comics. Well, I can't really be serious about comics, but I was interested in them. I used to be the neighborhood cartoonist. I did a daily in the street, in chalk, and the kids would come from blocks around to see the next chapter. I always wanted to be a cartoonist.

HM: Was that the first ambition you can remember having?

HK: The first and the last. Not really the last, but I was very sensitive to cartoons. I used to drag them out of the garbage cans early in the morning. The Hearst papers had the Sunday section, which was the best in town.

HM: The gag-crammed panels that were always a trademark of your style from the early *Mad* days on—how much of that was inspired by the German humorist Wilhelm Busch?

HK: Busch is certainly an inspiration, not for the crammed look,

LOOK, WIFE! THE FRAMEWORK IS DONE! IF MY SPINE DOES NOT CRACK, I SHALL FINISH OUR HOUSE BEFORE THE RICE HARVEST! THE NEXT STEP WILL BE PUTTING UP THE WALLS AND THATCHING THE ROOF! AND THEN PERHAPS, I SHALL DIG A WELL SO YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO CARRY THE WATER FROM THE RIVER!
2

but for the series. Busch was one of the first continuity cartoonists around, and it was his continuities that affected me. He had a great sense of continuity, you know: binga, binga, binga, binga, binga. The one responsible for the crammed look was Willie Elder. Willie proliferates ideas—visual ideas, not story ideas, but little visual *tchotchkes*, I call them.

HM: What kind of ideas do you think you and Elder generated that are unique to your style of humor?

HK: I don't know that "generate" is the right word, but we were the firstest with the mostest in comics satire, and I think that was our contribution. I don't know how conscious we were of what we were doing at the time, but our strongest effect was somewhere in the area of satirical graphics, which hadn't been very popular, to my memory. You asked me before what affected me most, and suddenly I remember: the college magazines. I thought college magazines were just the cat's meow. I remember getting ahold of one or two of them when I was very young and being completely floored by the mood of college humor. *Mad*, in a sense, put them out of business. We came along and did what they were doing, but we did it with a professional budget.

HM: What's funny to you? What makes you laugh?

HK: I think laughter is a nervous reaction, essentially. It's a buildup of tension, and then a release. And there are so many things that can do that to you. You know, if somebody came up behind you and goosed you, you might laugh or you might scream. I laugh at spontaneous, non-written, non-rehearsed humor, like that *Candid Camera* guy, Allen Funt. And *Bloopers*—things that are totally spontaneous make me laugh.

HM: How do you try to get that kind of humor across in your strips?

HK: By creating as many surprises and shocks as you can. That's where your creative talent comes into play, when you do something that's different, do something that's unexpected. You try to create a spontaneous situation by fooling your reader, by coming at him from a different direction.

HM: Have you been approached to do anything for the European market?

HK: I'm very familiar with the European market; nevertheless, their formats are foreign. To translate their circumstances into American circumstances is very difficult. As a matter of fact, *Heavy Metal* is the only successful translation I can think of offhand, and I imagine even in *Heavy Metal* you have problems—lousy translations, and, if I'm not mistaken, you pulp up your material with American, homegrown stuff, don't you? It's not all European. Still, I'm amazed at the infrequent use of foreign material. I have an attic that's just loaded with the stuff that's done in Europe. They keep sending me everything, and the work they do is just incredible—beautiful drawings and good stories—and the fact that they're not being done over here is almost outrageous.

There's so much hack stuff in this country in the comic format it always depressed me that to make a decent income, you had to hack. And if you didn't hack, you didn't make a good income. You can differentiate between the American system and the European system by the fact that the European cartoonists are stars in their own right, while the American cartoonists are still interchangeable. A hundred different guys can do *Superman*, but in the foreign comics they don't work that way at all. They wouldn't think of using several different artists for the same purpose, except in some freak thing like *Superdupont*, which I worked on, as did Neal Adams and a whole bunch of other guys. The craft is on a level far beyond what we're doing here. And you can tell the craft is on that level because of the reaction the readers have to the artists. It's unheard of here. The cartoonists are special people, much like the syndicates' cartoonists here. Charles Schulz is an example. The recognition he gets for what he does here is the kind of recognition that the comic-book artists get there in Europe.

HM: Do you have any ideas on ways that you think the comics industry could be better?

HK: Well, there has to be some kind of consciousness-raising. I'm not saying that it's anybody's duty to do this, but sooner or later the public's consciousness will be touched by the kind of high-grade stuff that we're talking about. I don't know how it'll happen or where it'll come from, but the capability is there. There's talent here, and it will break loose in that form sooner or later. What that requires, of course, is a consciousness of that possibility on the part of the readers, because they're the ones who supply the bucks that make everything possible. If, by some miracle, the European standards can take over the American comic books, then you'd see the miracle take place. The public isn't aware that these things are possible, and why should they be? Somebody's got to put it together and bring it to that audience. American comics have always been schlock from their very beginnings. Of course, I say this with certain reservations. I like to think that the E.C. stuff that we did was quality work, and I'm sure that there were others that did quality work, but it was always a struggle. We never really got paid commensurate with the value of the work.

HM: When and how did you start working for *Playboy*?

HK: Hefner came to New York and we had lunch together. He made it clear that if I ever left *Mad*, he was waiting. I'd been trying to sell Hefner on something, anything, and I would send him ideas, and we'd been doing "Goodman Beaver" for *Help* magazine, and it suddenly occurred to me, why can't we just turn him into a *her*? Same format, which was the schnub who was well-meaning and a good person but who gets into trouble all the time, sort of Candide-like, and that's the way we evolved into "Little Annie Fannie." I remember Hefner's letter; it was one word. He said, "Bull's-eye." Then I had a production problem

with "Annie Fannie"—I wasn't turning it out fast enough. We tried using other artists. The madness we went through trying to speed up! I would create a layout and I'd put a red pencil mark around this portion of the layout and that portion of the layout, and this would be for Willie Elder, and that would be for Jack Davis. We used Frank Frazetta, we used Russ Heath, we used Paul Coker, we used Arnold Roth. It didn't really work out, but it was a lot of fun, because Hefner was making money hand over fist, and he didn't know what to do with it. Well, he knew what to do with it, but he had a lot of it. One time we were sitting around the living room in Chicago and he said, "Do you realize we're pulling in five million dollars, net—*net*—every month at *Playboy*?" Five million dollars! So it was a very easy thing to get an airplane ticket to go to Timbuktu for research. Working with the guys on one Christmas deadline, I remember I rented a suite at the Algonquin, and I locked everybody into the hotel: Al Jaffe, Arnold Roth, Willie Elder, myself. We brought in drawing tables and I kept them there for a week just finishing it. But it still wasn't being produced fast enough, so I proposed something to Hefner. He agreed and I said to the guys, "Okay, pack up your toothbrushes, we're off to Chicago." We set them up on the Bunny floor, where the Bunnies were living, and we finished the story. And we had stories to tell because the mansion was always filled with celebrities: Norman Mailer, Budd Schulberg, Shel Silverstein. It was just an unreal period in my life.

HM: How much did you have to do with bringing Terry Gilliam together with the Monty Python people?

HK: I had everything to do with it. We were doing these *fumetti* at *Help* magazine. We exported the form from South America and Italy, where they would take still photographs and put them together to form a strip and put balloons in. So we did the opposite: we made up the story and then took the pictures. Terry was chief cook and bottle washer at the time. We'd get a photographer, we'd get actors, we'd get props, and we would constantly look to get off-Broadway people who were hungry enough to pose for the publicity free. We got people like Woody Allen, we got all kinds of actors and actresses to pose for our covers. Then Terry got ahold of an actor from an off-Broadway show featuring an English comic group that was touring the United States. The actor was John Cleese. Finally, after Terry had had it with *Help*, he took a trip to England and made his presence known to John Cleese, who asked him to join the Monty Python group as an animator.

HM: Have you had any kind of movie offers in your long, checkered career?

HK: Oh, I worked on a file of "Annie Fannie" movie offers, but nothing's ever come to fruition. I don't know why. It's been a very frustrating experience, because the deals that we've gotten have stopped at Hefner's door. I know that Hefner has a very bad track record with movies. I don't know why that is, but it's been very frustrating.

HM: Would you like to direct a film?

HK: That is probably my dream. I've just more or less given up at this stage, but sure, doesn't everybody?

HM: What would you do if you could have your wildest fantasy?

HK: Well, just do a storyboard and have it be realized as a movie. When I was doing the *fumetti*, it was like doing movies in still pictures, and it had elements of directing that were pretty heady. Maybe the height of *fumetti*-making came when I did them for *Playboy*. We did this one cowboy story, "The Bad, The Beautiful and The Garlic," or something like that. I had Tony Randall and a cast of thousands, costumes, and a storyboarded script. Up to that point, I was doing everything Hitchcock did. Then we would shoot the still pictures, and that was fun. And I think the reason directing is fun for me and anybody else is, you create a fantasy on paper, your own fantasy, and then you live it. It's like playing cops and robbers when you were a kid. You're living your imaginings, and that's why directing is so fascinating.

HM: You've been doing comics for a long time, and your work's been pretty influential. How do you react to the idea of being a culture hero to the people who followed your work all these years?

HK: How do I react? I react one predictable way: "So where's the money?" ■

Flipping Coens

When **Joel** and **Ethan Coen**'s ***Blood Simple*** was screened at the 1984 New York Film Festival, it created more than a ripple of approval. Think of it as a *tsunami* of critical acclaim. Then, a few months later, when the film was released in a dismal winter film season, the tidal wave struck again. "One of the most brazenly self-assured . . . debuts in American film history," gushed *New York* magazine film critic David Denby.

All of this has left the brothers, Joel, twenty-nine, and Ethan, twenty-seven, not so much elated as dazed and confused. Joel, an NYU film school graduate and the director of *Blood Simple*, and Ethan, a Princeton philosophy major who produced the film (they wrote the script together), tried to take all the brouhaha in stride. But the two agree that being feted on pop shows like *Entertainment Tonight*, sandwiched between reports on the latest celebrities to check into the Betty Ford Burnout Center, was the equivalent of an out-of-body experience.

Perhaps the key to their ability to survive the personality parade can be found in their $1.5 million film. A nasty/funny murder story that makes running gags out of not-so-dead bodies and rotting fish heads, *Blood Simple* is part Hitchcock, part Grand Guignol, and part pulp detective fiction. But it's not only a knowing amalgam of cinéaste jokes and *hommages*. It's also an arresting portrait of America as a place where everyone is on a collision course with bad luck.

—James Verniere

Ethan Joel

Heavy Metal: What inspired the film?
Joel Coen: Just the desire to work within the murder story genre.
Ethan Coen: We weren't inspired so much by other movies as we were by certain types of novels, especially James M. Cain's novels.
JC: We both started reading Cain about seven years ago, when his novels were reissued in paperback with those cheesy covers. Then we sought out the more obscure stuff.
HM: Like what?
JC: *Career in C Major. Jealous Woman.*
EC: *Sinful Woman. The Embezzler.*
HM: In *Blood Simple* your characters seem almost puny in contrast to the overwhelming events.
JC: Right.
EC: Exactly, the people get sucked in by the plot. It's sort of weird, Gothic fatalism.
HM: Do you feel overwhelmed by the plot twist your careers have taken? The praise must be overwhelming.
EC: Well, it's hard to respond to some of the more extreme reviews.
JC: I guess we're trying to keep ourselves a little distant from our own "plot." It's easy to be cynical about some of the reviews we've gotten.
HM: How did you react to the critical analyses of the film's symbolism and hidden messages?
JC: Sometimes I thought it was pretty funny.
EC: But it's all right with us. Critics have to have fun, too.
JC: We're more interested in what grabs an audience.
EC: William Faulkner once compared writing novels to building a chicken coop. What you want basically is a coop that keeps the chickens in. If you can add a coat of flashy paint, then you do. But it's not your primary concern.
HM: How did you develop your visual style?
JC: What I know is that you don't learn it in film school. What we usually do is start with an image. For instance, we knew we wanted the film to begin with a picture: headlights in the rain.
HM: What do you learn in film school?
JC: You don't learn a lot, but NYU does give you the opportunity to learn by making films. Most of the classroom teaching is irrelevant.
HM: Ethan, you didn't go to film school.
EC: No, I studied philosophy to prepare myself for life [laughs].
HM: You're friends as well as brothers. What form of mass culture influenced you while you were growing up in Minneapolis?
JC: More television than anything else.
EC: I read a little. I really liked Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island* because I had already read *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and when Captain Nemo showed up at the end of *Mysterious Island* it was kind of like *Green Acres* spinning off from *Petticoat Junction*.
JC: I liked *Mannix*. Our formative influence was generally pop culture crud.
EC: But interesting crud.
HM: Your film had a low budget and yet was quite successful. Why doesn't Hollywood make more low-budget films?
EC: Our lawyer says that Hollywood doesn't make million-dollar films because producers can't steal a million dollars from a million-dollar budget.
HM: Has Hollywood knocked on your door yet?
JC: Yeah, we've gotten a lot of calls, but we haven't responded to any overtures yet because we want to finish the script we're working on now. It's a comedy and we're writing it with Sam Raimi. We want to make it independently so we can have creative control. Still, it's unrealistic to believe we can survive outside the studio distribution system.
HM: What would you do if Dino De Laurentiis called and offered you a five-million-dollar fee to make *Dune II*?
JC & EC: We'd do it. ■

Nice Guys Don't Always Finish Last: Chuck Norris

Chuck Norris may be the toughest son of a bitch in the movies, but in real life the Oklahoma-born martial arts expert-turned-actor is a pushover—not literally, of course. Norris, who first gained notoriety as the undefeated Middleweight World Karate Champion from 1968 to 1974, made a successful transition from martial arts to movie arts in 1979 when his first major starring role in *Good Guys Wear Black* established him as the screen's reigning king of ass kickers, a title he's not particularly happy with.

Norris may have been a bit stiff in that first film, but he has grown both as a certified box office star and an actor with "strong and silent"-type performances in films like *Force of One* (1979), *The Octagon* (1980), *Silent Rage* (1982), *Lone Wolf McQuade* (1983), and his latest, *Missing in Action*.

The paradox of Chuck Norris is that despite his extraordinary mastery of fighting he is an exceedingly gentle man. Born in the "backwoods," Norris and his two brothers (one brother, Whelan, was killed in Vietnam in '69; the other, Aaron, is Norris's stunt coordinator) were raised by his mother, who held her family together despite the absence of an alcoholic husband. Norris married his high school sweetheart (they will soon celebrate their twenty-sixth anniversary) and enlisted in the Air Force. While stationed in Korea, he became a student of the fighting technique Tae Kwon Do. Within a few years, Norris had established a string of martial arts academies, including one in Hollywood, where he met his friend and acting mentor, the late Steve McQueen. McQueen encouraged Norris to try his hand at acting, and the result is a box office phenomenon.

Today Norris lives with his wife, Diane, and their two sons, ages nineteen and twenty-two. At forty-four, he still trains six days a week, three hours a day, to stay in fighting trim, and he even has a book, *Chuck Norris: Super Fitness*, which explains his training techniques. To unwind, he's been known to sip a drink called—appropriately—a "Chuck Norris Kicker," a combination of iced tea and Grand Marnier.

—James Verniere

Heavy Metal: Why do you think your films have been so popular?
Chuck Norris: My films always present a good guy doing battle with evil. It's that simple, and, of course, good always wins. My

films are sort of like old cowboy films. They're popular because they're upbeat movies that make audiences feel good. They give people a chance to forget their troubles.

HM: Do you resent the fact that your films are often referred to as "chop-sockies"?

CN: Oh yeah, that's the one thing that drives me absolutely nuts. If you really watch my films you'll see that they're not chop-sockies. They never were. But because I'm a martial arts fighter, I have been placed in that category. I never wanted to do that type of film. But I did do one, *Return of the Dragon*, with Bruce Lee. Then I decided that I didn't want to go that route because I knew it was limited. I wanted to do films that had good acting, good directing, and good scripts. Of course, when I had to fight I used martial arts. People won't go for the old John Wayne style of fighting in this day and age. They're too sophisticated.

HM: You first studied Tae Kwon Do—what type of martial arts do you practice now?

CN: I've studied many different styles over the last twenty-five years—Korean, Japanese, Chinese—and I've tried to incorporate them all into what is basically an Americanized system.

HM: What was it about martial arts that attracted you in the first place?

CN: I was really impressed by the mental discipline of the teachers. You could see it in their eyes while they trained. Just their tremendous sense of power, and, being a kid at the time, I wanted to experience that same feeling.

HM: The martial arts were very popular in Hollywood in the seventies. I remember reading about fat film producers who claimed to have black belts.

CN: Yeah, yeah. It became a kind of Hollywood "thing." Very few of the actors I taught took it seriously. They would study for a week and then say they knew karate. Steve McQueen was very devoted and became very good. You know who else was good? Bob Barker. Bob's trained for over ten years. And he is just excellent. I guess Bob and Steve were the two most diligent celebrities. The rest just came and went.

HM: You were also a friend of Bruce Lee. Was there ever any competition between you?

CN: No, he didn't compete. And when he was doing films over in Hong Kong I was still in the karate world. I wasn't even planning a movie career. We met when he attended a championship match I had won. He was doing the *Green Hornet* television series and we decided to work out together.

HM: The world karate matches can be brutal. Have you ever been injured?

CN: Oh yeah, but nothing serious. Broken noses, broken hands. Stuff like that.

HM: Many of the films you've made since your days as a karate teacher have had strong anti-drug messages. Why is that?

CN: Having been a teacher, I saw how drugs are tearing this country apart. When I taught kids I tried to explain that karate gives a person pride and self-esteem. Once a person has that he doesn't need drugs.

HM: The cliché is that someone who lifts weights or studies karate used to be a ninety-pound weakling.

CN: Well, it is true that I was basically a non-athletic person. I never excelled at sports while I was growing up. Plus, I was very introverted. So martial arts gave me a chance to counter all that, to overcome my shyness and at the same time to develop a physical skill. I mean, here I was, a kid who had never been athletic, who became world karate champion. And a shy kid who's now an actor.

HM: It must have been difficult for you to retrain as an actor, to become a novice all over again.

CN: It's never been easy. It still isn't easy. I jumped in at thirty-five. But I've reached a certain level of success because I was willing to work like a dog. You can't sit around and wait for success to come to you.

HM: But didn't your success as a karate champion make it easier for you to become an actor?

CN: Just the opposite. Most producers said, "You're an athlete, not an actor." There have been lots of athletes who tried acting. But not many have made it. I decided to have something more to offer them, so I wrote the original story for *Good Guys Wear Black*.

HM: What was acting like at first?

CN: Frustrating. I remember going to my first acting class. Most of the students were college kids with experience, and they were much younger than me. So I was really scared, and after I did a scene, the teacher said, "Chuck, for an athlete, you're the stiffest person I've ever seen." And I was stiff. I was stiff in *Good Guys*. But I'm loosening up, and I've been fortunate, because my films have been successful anyway. Audiences have tolerated me.

HM: Do you think you have a macho image?

CN: You can usually tell if you have a macho image by the number of people who try to start a fight with you. That kind of thing always happens to Clint Eastwood. But I've never had that problem.

HM: Perhaps people just have a good sense of self-preservation.

CN: No, no. There are guys who don't care who you are, they'll pick a fight with you. But my image is of a guy who doesn't look for trouble. My characters don't walk around with a chip on their shoulder. But if they're pushed there's hell to pay.

HM: Have you become a sex symbol?

CN: [laughs] Well, I didn't think so, but about five years ago I was lecturing to a school full of young women in New York City, and I got pulled off the stage. They tried to rip my clothes off. I couldn't believe it. Security had to pull me out. It's funny. It was the one time I wasn't expecting any trouble in New York.■

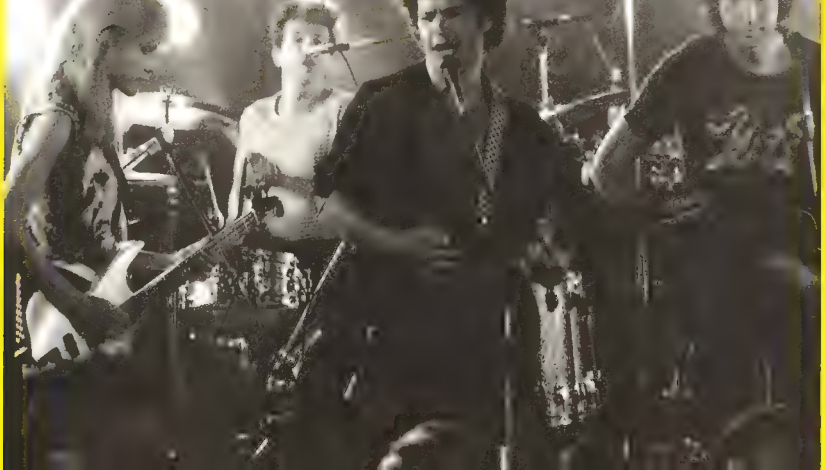
Raving and Drooling

Unlike most of us in the whining-about-music biz, *HM* contributor **Jon Tiven** puts his product where his mouth is. Unsavory as that might sound, what it means is that young Jon (assisted by wife and co-conspirator, Sally) ain't content with mere carping—he's out there *doing* something about it.

As evidence, we have the reissue series of early-sixties British pop Jon is masterminding for Compleat Records (Polygram dist.), the result of a lifelong passion as well as some recent pith-helmeted vault-crawling in darkest Albion. Already released budget-priced double-LPs include **The Kinks' *Compleat Collection*** (twenty early classics by the Muswell Hillbillies, including all the obvious ones and a few not-so's as well) and ***20th Anniversary Edition*** (five more hits, a bunch of covers, and a bunch of semi-obscure derivative originals); the **Small Faces' *Big Music*** (follow-up to the Faces' compilation Jon did for Sire's short-lived *Immediate Records Story* series a few years back, collecting outtakes from the classic *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* and other "Itchycoo Park"-era rarities); ***White Boy Blues: The Classic Guitars of Clapton, Beck, & Page*** (a real treasure trove—mostly instrumental jam tracks of Page-instigated blues duets, with rhythmic accompaniment provided by an obscure buncha Limeys called, let me see now, the Rolling Stones); the **Moody Blues' *Early Blues*** (least interesting of the lot—limp pre-"Nights in White Satin" soul covers and pastiches, not nearly as good as what Steve Winwood was doing with the Spencer Davis Group at about the same time, with only the classic "Go Now" providing any spark of originality); ***The Immediate Singles Story: 20x10*** (a wonderfully weird assortment of oddities, including early, bluesy Rod Stewart, post-Velvet and pre-*Marble Index* Nico trying to sound normal for producer Page, as well as some ancient Fleetwood Mac, Chris Farlowe, Faces, Nice, and Amen Corner); and, somewhat out of the mold, ***London Dilemma*** by **Paul Young and Streetband** (mid-seventies rock 'n' roll by now-successful soul-boy Young, showing a voice that sounds to me like Yes's Jon Anderson after endocrinological therapy). Due for imminent release is another Immediate collection (a side's worth of Page, plus some Steve Marriott, John Mayall, Savoy Brown, and a pre-10cc outfit called the Mockingbirds); a compilation of sides from Marriott's post-Faces Humble Pie; rerelease of the long-unavailable *Ogden's Nut Gone Flake* (in a *square*—not round—jacket this time); and an exhumation of gems from the Pye Records tomb (six previously non-U.S. Bowie cuts, plus some Searchers, Donovan, Sandie Shaw, Foundations, Honeycombs—with a cute babe slapping the skins—and the unlamented Mungo Jerry). Some of this stuff is essential, most is worthwhile for one reason or another (mainly 'cause they're good tunes), and my only real complaint is the lack of authoritative info on many of the albums (Jon gives only the data he's sure of, pointing out that everywhere he looked he found conflicting facts). And now the bastard is threatening to unleash a whole shitload *more* of this stuff on us, dropping tantalizing hints of a Tutankhamen-like stash of live tapes, rehearsal jams, and unreleased studio masters he unearthed on his last Indiana Jones expedition to England.

But wait. In his spare time, Jon-boy is also a musician and songwriter, a veteran of stints with the Jim Carroll band, the Subgenius rolling Bob review, and the backup combo for the comedy team of Franken and Davis (you can spot his mug pretending to play drums in their upcoming movie, *Date Night*, now filming in fabulous Chicago—the babe on bass is Sally).

Whew! Does this guy sleep? What drug is he on? Where can I get some?



The Brain Bat of Comics: Basil Wolverton

IN THE FIRST PLACE, CRACKER CRUMBS WILL GET UNDER THE COVERS, AND SCRATCH YOU ALL NIGHT.....
OUCH!
THEY MAY EVEN GET BETWEEN YOUR TOES AND TICKLE YOU FOR HOURS!
HEE!
HAW!
YUK! YUK!

"The Eye of Doom." "One of Our Graveyards Is Missing." "Robot Woman." "The Brain Bats of Venus." "They Crawl by Night." Welcome to the wonderful world of **Basil Wolverton**, the most underappreciated twisted genius in the history of comics.

If you're under thirty-five, you might well be asking, Basil who?? Because, genius or not, Wolverton even in his period of greatest exposure (1939–1953) was something of a mystery man. Although his credits include such popular books as *Mad*, *Target*, *Marvel Tales*, and *Whiz*, much of his greatest work appeared in some of history's most obscure comic books: *Mr. Mystery*, *Amazing Mystery Funnies*, *Krazy*, *Tessie the Typist*, *Weird Mysteries*, *Circus*, *Gay*, *Joker*. Ever hear of these? Don't feel bad; neither did a lot of other people who lived during those dear, departed days of yore. I mean, we're not exactly talking *Action Comics* here.

Actually, there is a very simple explanation for why Wolverton labored in such relative obscurity during a career that spanned six decades. Working from his home in Vancouver, Washington—which *is* in the United States, sort of—Wolverton mailed his work in (uninsured) to the New York City editors he worked for, which included almost everyone at every publishing house at one time or another. It was because he lived so far away, Wolverton felt, that he was rarely given any cover assignments, featured in the front of the book, or paid the actual going rate for art and story. (On one of his infrequent trips to New York City, Wolverton got wise to this, and a whole heap of back pay landed in his lap.) He worked on only two features that ran on a regular basis for more than a year: the sf-cum-WWII-spies strip "Spacehawk" (1940–42) in *Target Comics* and the wacked-out "Powerhouse Pepper," which Stan Lee published whenever and wherever he felt like it between 1942 and 1949. The rest of his strips included imaginative space opera like "Meteor Martin" (1940) and "Space Patrol" (1939–40), total lunacy like "Doc Rockblock" (1944) and "Inspector Hector the Crime Detector" (1944–45), brief fillers such as "Culture Corner" (1945–52), superhero work like "Rockman USA" (1941), and the sf humor piece "Jumpin' Jupiter," a backup in the now-recognized classic *Weird Tales of the Future* book (1952–53), which Wolverton co-published.

Not everyone is captivated by the private logic of Wolverton's humor strips, which rely on rhyming dialogue, puns, and "bigfoot" art (since popularized by Robert Crumb) to create their effects. Admitting to the influence of Rube Goldberg (as well as the conventions of vaudeville, in which Wolverton performed a musical act in the 1920s), Wolverton once remarked, "My style, if it is a style, developed like one's handwriting, which can sometimes be unintelligible to others. . . . I realize my art isn't good."

Perhaps not "good" by the accepted standards of graphic-story excellence (embodied by the 1930s work of Hal Foster, Alex Raymond, and Milton Caniff), but it could reach greatness, particularly in the sf/horror pieces Wolverton created in the early fifties. There were just seventeen of these, beginning with "The End of the World" (*Marvel Tales* #102, 1951) and ending with "Swamp Monster" (*Weird Mysteries* #5, 1953). Everything that can be done in the way of suffocating nightmare was achieved in this cycle—which amounts to a mere ninety-five pages of story and art—and for this work alone Wolverton should be accorded the respect automatically given to (less warped) comic book masters like Will Eisner ("Spirit"), Jack Cole ("Plastic Man"), and Carl Barks ("Donald Duck"). Of course, he never will be—his work is just too grotesque, too peculiar, to ever achieve mass appeal—but if it ever could be collected in a full-length volume, it would at the least open a lot of people's eyes. (They might not be able to *sleep* for a while, but great art always extracts a price.)

Think about this: Wolverton never had an assistant, never relied on the collaborative efforts of a "shop," and never was given a specific assignment by an editor. Everything sprang full-blown from his fertile (some would say perverse) imagination. He penciled, he inked, he lettered, he scripted (except for four stories given to him by Atlas/Marvel) everything. When you read a Wolverton story, it's a *Wolverton* story, and no one else's. Wolverton once admitted to being disappointed upon a visit to New York at the division of labor in the comic houses he visited. "Writing and cartooning go together," he complained, not realizing how unique his gifts were.

Wolverton's post-1953 output included advertising work, pieces in *Mad*, *Life*, *Plop*, and, most important, an unusual adaptation of the Bible entitled "The Story of Man" that he drew for *The Plain Truth* magazine, and which Ambassador Press (of Pasadena, California) published as a book in 1958. It's the Bible, all right, but strained through the fever-racked vision of Wolverton. "The Story of Man" is every bit as frightening as "The Brain Bats of Venus"—perhaps even more so, considering the source. (If Wolverton had ever gotten his hands on *The Wizard of Oz*, little kiddies would have been checked into padded cells in droves.) Basil Wolverton died in 1980. His son now handles his estate, the legacy of thousands of hours of working at that drawing board in Vancouver. But Wolverton was never too impressed with his accomplishments. A typical self-denigration: "I always wanted to be an actor, until I heard that a two-bit actor earns less than a two-bit cartoonist. There were times when I wondered how that could be possible."

Wolverton may have labored for a lot of two-bit people, but he was a twenty-four-carat talent. Even if he would have been the last to admit it.■

Viking Youth: Walter Bannert

Like Penelope Spheeris's *Suburbia*, **Walter Bannert**'s ***The Inheritors***, a portrait of the neo-Nazi movement in Western Europe, seems a unique, new film form—the B-documentary, if you will. Like Spheeris, Bannert, a young Austrian filmmaker with extensive experience as a director of documentaries, combines both social realism and imagery culled from exploitation movies and sleazy tabloids. In *The Inheritors*, two teenage boys, both alienated from family and peer groups, find sex, solace, and solidarity as recruits in a fascist organization. It's sort of *The Hardy Boys in Jackboots*, and the effect of the film is unnerving. Is this Bannert's idea of socially redeeming filmmaking, or is he just exploiting an issue? He claims it's the former, but there's no denying the nihilistic ardor that charges his sex scenes, some of which were actually excised for U.S. distribution. Of course, the film really *is* about neo-Nazism, and as Bannert sees it the movement is sweeping the Western world. Is there still anyone who thinks it can't happen here?

—James Verniere

HM: How was your film received in Europe?
WB: Very well. The audience consisted for the most part of young people from ages sixteen to twenty-five, who saw the film and then went out and talked about it.
HM: What was the reaction among older viewers?
WB: I think they were frightened by it. There were many letters written to Austrian and German newspapers asking politicians how such a movement could be possible, since such groups are prohibited by law. The film more or less brought the issue to the attention of the public for the first time. At the same time, I was criticized for dirtying my own nest by reminding people of something that had supposedly died out forty years ago.
HM: I read that the theaters showing the film received bomb threats.
WB: Or threats of arson. In Austria one distributor was actually intimidated by the threats and decided not to handle the film. But it turned out to be the best-attended Austrian film when it did get released. In Germany it was different. It was very difficult to get theater bookings because there were so many threats. One bomb even exploded in a theater, but we can't be sure it was because of the film. Supposedly, it might have been a projectionist who was angry because he lost his job. The most significant event occurred in Stuttgart while people were lining up at a theater box office. A group of adolescents showed up and began beating the people in line. Another time, the local leader of the neo-Fascists came with about thirty of his followers, all dressed up in their jackets and boots. They sat in the front of the theater and created a disturbance while the film was playing. Finally, a policeman had to be stationed at every performance, and in fact the police may have helped suppress the film by warning all the theater owners that they were in danger if they showed it.

HM: Is it a myth that the Nazis disappeared in 1945?
WB: You should keep in mind that the neo-Fascists today claim that they have no connection to the old Nazis. They also say that there never was a Holocaust, that no Jew was ever gassed. They tell young people that these are lies invented by the American Occupation forces. But the fact is that although they don't wear Nazi emblems, which are illegal, they do preach the same things.
HM: You visited many neo-Nazi camps in Germany and Austria. What were they like?
WB: The camps I saw were very clean and orderly. They were for boys either from nine to twelve or from twelve to fourteen. The children had been sent by their parents. The biggest one in Austria is called "Viking Youth," and all the scenes in my film—the firearms training and the mock executions—were things I first witnessed in these camps.

HM: Is the neo-Nazi movement on the Continent at all related to groups like the National Front in the U.K.?
WB: It cannot be proved, but whenever there is a big rally people show up representing all countries, including America, England, and France. In fact, all the documents and pamphlets are printed in America.
HM: Do you have any idea how widespread the movement is here or who is financing it?
WB: No, all I know is that the company printing the material is located in Lincoln, Nebraska.
HM: Why are young people attracted to the movement?
WB: Partially because the neo-Fascists offer young people another kind of family, a family that offers understanding and an outlet for anger and frustration. Many of the members are from broken homes, and at first they join for the camaraderie and the sense of adventure.
HM: The film also has some fairly graphic sex. What's the connection?
WB: Many of these groups offer the promise of casual sex as an enticement. But most of the members do not have a normal attitude toward sex or women. These groups preach that a woman belongs either in the kitchen or in bed. And they like to demonstrate their superior power in their sexual relationships. Sex for them becomes just another kind of fascism. ■

VIDEO VOYEUR

BY JIM FARBER

Ghoulies (1985, Vestron)

Directed by Luca Bercovici.

The Ghoulies are basically just freelance Gremlins at the service of a group of blood-crazed devil worshipers. Said ghoulies have a decided penchant for eating people's faces, though they're outclassed in the terror department by a couple of midgets from hell. The human cast is much less likable—a group of rather seasoned-looking college students, all of whom you can't wait to see get snuffed. Still, the movie does feature some neat effects, a decent amount of tension, and some inspired casting—including L.A. would-be rocker Keith Joe Dick as an obnoxious college type, and hack rock star Michael Des Barres as a demon with a tongue long enough to strangle Gene Simmons.

Crypt of the Living Dead (1972, JLT Films)

Directed by Ray Danton.

Also featured under the far zippier title *Hannah, Queen of the Vampires*, this flick is only for those who revel in the ordinary. Nothing in it is interesting enough to be really bad. Instead it just sort of lies there—stiff.

Karamoja (VCR Video)

Directed by Dr. William Truetle.

From the lowest reaches of video sleaze comes *Karamoja*. It's a pure schlockumentary about an African tribe called the Hamites whose idea of a good time is to slice themselves open with sharp spears, swig goat's blood, and, for an encore, rub cow bowels on their chests. We also discover that the women always carry nooses just in case they suddenly have the urge to off themselves. Basically, the movie poses as a sort of anthropological inquiry, complete with great racist references to "darkest Africa." It's all narrated by an unseen man who, apropos of nothing, starts things off by telling us he's a dentist with six months to live. Of course, it seems the real purpose of his journey is to bring back as much gross footage as possible. Sort of like Margaret Mead meets David Cronenberg.

Santa Claus Conquers the Martians (1964, Embassy)

Directed by Nicholas Webster.

This sixties sci-fi kiddie movie is a classic of sorts. It features turkey-queen Pia Zadora as a tot, and, rest assured, she was just as commanding a presence then as now. Actually, Pia, who plays a Martian brat, has only about three lines, which hasn't stopped Embassy from plastering pictures and mentions of her all over the cassette package. Luckily she's not the movie's only draw. The low, low production values give it the look of a fourth-grade play, which in this kiddie context winds up heartwarming in a warped sort of way. The theme is also sweetly dumb (even Martians need Santa Claus), and how can you dislike a movie that equates watching TV with insurrection?

Conquest (Media)

Directed by Lucio Fulci.

Director Lucio Fulci seems to have hit upon a novel formula for keeping this movie's budget low. Put smoke machines everywhere and shoot nothing but close-ups. That way no one can see what the hell's going on, so the director doesn't have to waste any money on such frills as props or sets. Plot-wise, it's a Conan-type tale of primitive warriors—only there's no action, plot, character, or even unintentional fun. A new low, even for this column.

Empire of the Ants (1977, Embassy)

Directed by Bert I. Gordon.

Two big selling points here: the old American International Pictures cartoon schlock style, and Joan Collins. Joan gets to play a money-grubbing bitch for a change. She's involved in selling swamp land to yahoos—all of whom check out the land solely because the trip is free. The so-called "Dreamland Estates" become the breeding ground for the giant insects (so much for complex irony). The dialogue is filled with inspired "encounter session" non-revelations, and the ants themselves, while not exactly realistic, are still icky enough to make you lose your lunch.

Mutant (1984, Vestron)

Directed by John "Bud" Cardos.

How's this for originality: people are turning into mutants after being exposed to toxic waste, left there by—guess who?—the government. Personally, I'm so sick of this cliché, it's enough to make me fond of James Watt. Also, the mutations aren't even that mutated. People just turn blue and spew cum from their palms. Also, Wings Hauser makes a surprising hero here, given the fact that his character is a real macho boor. Still, the chase scene at the end is pretty good, even if it is a bit too much like *Night of the Living Dead*.

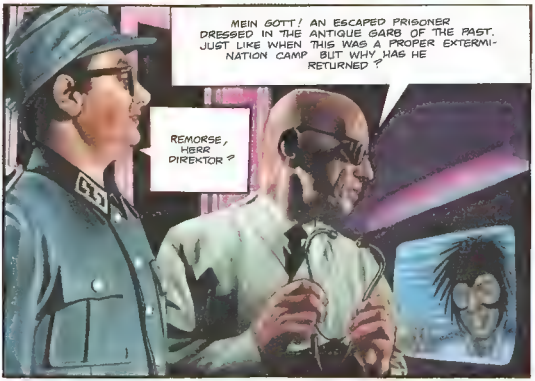
THIRD REICH OPERA PROUDLY PRESENTS:

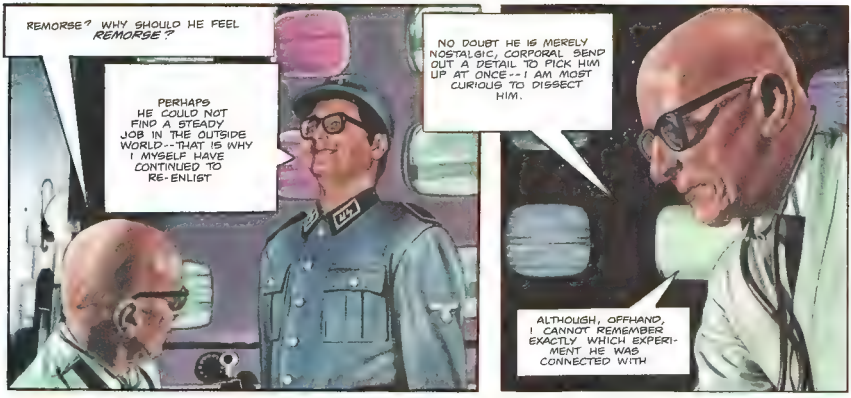
1984
OW! MY ANKLE!
DADDY, DADDY--WHAT'S A NAZI?
WELL, SON, THEY WERE A BUNCH OF EVIL PEOPLE WHO MARCHED AROUND IN UNIFORMS AND TRIED TO KILL EVERYONE WHO WASN'T JUST LIKE THEM.

HELLOOO! ANYBODY HOME? IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE OPEN.

OF COURSE, IT'S OPEN! JUST RING THE BELL.

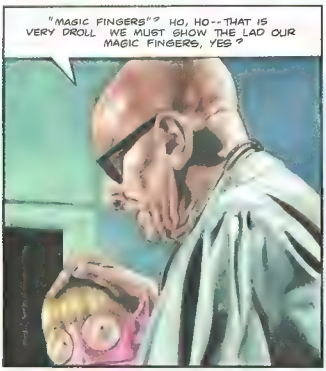
HERR DIREKTOR! THERE IS SOMETHING VERY STRANGE HERE ON THE OUTSIDE MONITOR.

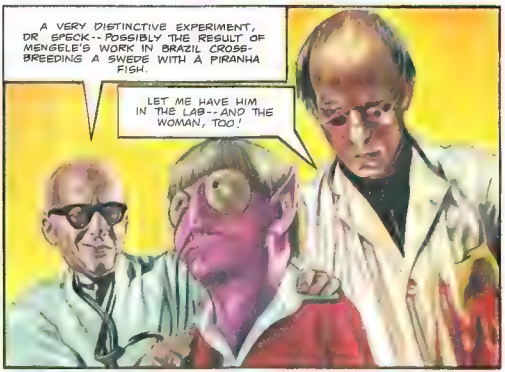

MEIN GOTT! AN ESCAPED PRISONER DRESSED IN THE ANTIQUE GARB OF THE PAST. JUST LIKE WHEN THIS WAS A PROPER EXTERMINATION CAMP BUT WHY HAS HE RETURNED?
REMORSE, HERR DIREKTOR?


REMORSE? WHY SHOULD HE FEEL REMORSE?
PERHAPS HE COULD NOT FIND A STEADY JOB IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD--THAT IS WHY I MYSELF HAVE CONTINUED TO RE-ENLIST
NO DOUBT HE IS MERELY NOSTALGIC, CORPORAL SEND OUT A DETAIL TO PICK HIM UP AT ONCE--I AM MOST CURIOUS TO DISSECT HIM.
ALTHOUGH, OFFHAND, I CANNOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHICH EXPERIMENT HE WAS CONNECTED WITH

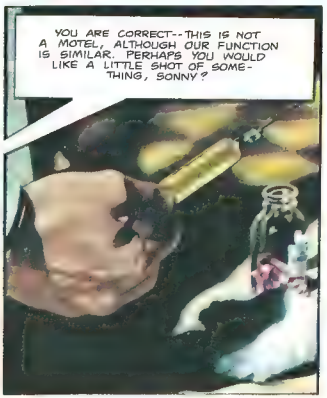
IS THIS THE MOTEL NOW, DADDY?
NO, SON. I DON'T THINK SO--

AWW...I WANTED TO PLAY WITH THE "MAGIC FINGERS"


"MAGIC FINGERS"? HO, HO--THAT IS VERY DROLL WE MUST SHOW THE LAD OUR MAGIC FINGERS, YES?


A VERY DISTINCTIVE EXPERIMENT, DR SPECK--POSSIBLY THE RESULT OF MENGELE'S WORK IN BRAZIL CROSS-BREEDING A SWEDE WITH A PIRANHA FISH.
LET ME HAVE HIM IN THE LAB--AND THE WOMAN, TOO!

JUST A MINUTE--WHERE ARE YOU TAKING THEM?
HEY!
CALM YOURSELF, MY FRIEND. ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF --I AM DR. KLAUS VON BÜLLSEYE.


YOU ARE CORRECT--THIS IS NOT A MOTEL, ALTHOUGH OUR FUNCTION IS SIMILAR. PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE A LITTLE SHOT OF SOME-THING, SONNY?

TO BE CONTINUED

JESSIE, THIS IS SAHAMIS BASE CALLING

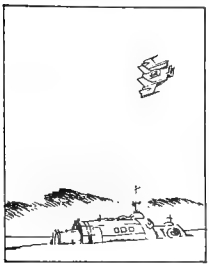
ADAPTED FROM *ADVENTURE*, BY JACK LONDON

by Carlos Gimenez

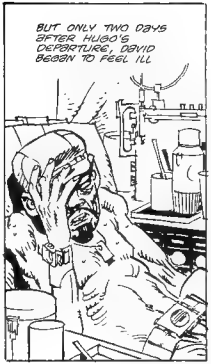
THE STENCH-SOAKED ATMOSPHERE SCORCHED THE LUNGS LIKE MOLTEN TIN. NOT THE SLIGHTEST BREEZE STIRRED WITHIN PLANET SAHAMIS IV. THE EARTHLING WAS OBVIOUSLY TERRIBLY ILL. HE CLUNG TO HIS MOUNT WITH THE LAST BIT OF STRENGTH HE COULD MUSTER. HIS ACHING HEAD COULD ALL BUT NOD DOWN, AND EVERY TIME HE LIFTED IT, HE WOULD RAISE HIS FEVERISH EYES TO THE PLANET'S RED AND SCALDING SKY.

NOT A SIGN OF THE JESSIE DAMN, HUGO SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE
DAVID SHELDON AND HIS PARTNER HUGO DRUMMOND LANDED ON SAHAMIS IV SEVERAL YEARS AGO
WHEN THEY ANALYZED THE PLANET'S SOIL THEY FOUND IT CONTAINED A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF LARGE CYTHERINE CRYSTALS
SO THEY BUILT THEIR BASE CAMP..
AND DROVE 10 DOZEN NATIVES FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET
IN THE BEGINNING EVERYTHING WENT REASONABLY WELL THE SAHAMESE WORKED IN THE MUDSWAMP, RAKING AND SIEVING THE DAMP SOIL.
PICKING OUT CYTHERINE NUGGETS.
A FEW MORE YEARS, HUGO, AND WE'LL BE RICH YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW RICH!
BUT THEN THE EPIDEMIC STRUCK
SHELDON AND DRUMMOND DIDN'T QUITE KNOW HOW TO TAKE IT THEY CALLED IT DYSENTERY, FOR LACK OF ANOTHER NAME, AND TRIED TO FIGHT IT WITH STRONG DOSES OF SULFADIAZINE AND OTHER ANTIBIOTICS
DURING THE FIRST WEEK EIGHT NATIVES DIED
FOUR MORE DIED IN THE SECOND AND 13 IN THE THIRD

IN VIEW OF THE LOSS OF MANPOWER, THEY DECIDED TO GO OUT AND RECRUIT MORE WORKERS. HUGO WOULD TAKE THE JESSIE, AND DAVID WOULD WATCH OVER THE CAMP



BUT ONLY TWO DAYS AFTER HUGO'S DEPARTURE, DAVID BEGAN TO FEEL ILL

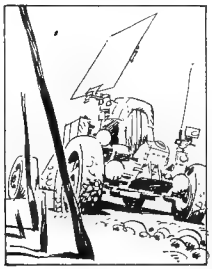


THE FEVER ROSE SHARPLY AND HE SUFFERED NAUSEA AND COLD SHIVERS. BUT IN SPITE OF ALL THIS, HE MANAGED TO KEEP THE SSHAMESE AT THEIR JOB

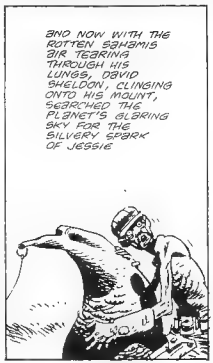
AND WHEN HE COULDN'T STAND UP ANY LONGER, HE HAD HIMSELF HOISTED ATOP A TOHOT WHICH ENABLED HIM TO RIDE THROUGH THE MOORS

HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO USE EITHER OF THE ROBOTS THEY HAD STORED ON BOARD, BUT THEY HAD BROKEN DOWN DAYS AGO

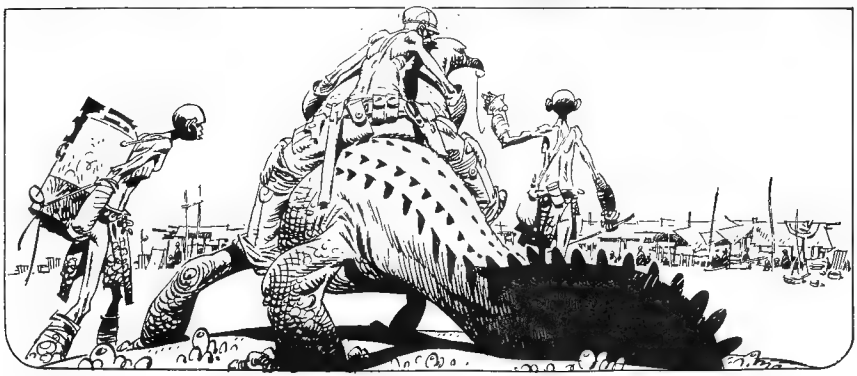
THE HIGH HUMIDITY AND THE CORROSIVE ACTION OF THE SWAMPS HAD SPOILED EVEN THEIR STURDY MACHINERY



AND NOW WITH THE ROTTEN SSHAMSIS AIR TEARING THROUGH HIS LUNGS, DAVID SHELDON, CLINGING ONTO HIS MOUNT, SEARCHED THE PLANET'S GLARING SKY FOR THE SILVERY SPARK OF JESSIE



DAMN HIM, HUGO SHOULD HAVE BEEN BACK BY NOW!



THREE TIMES A DAY, SHELDON DRAGGED HIMSELF OUT TO THE STINKING HOVELS WHERE THE DYING NATIVES HAD BEEN GATHERED HE NAIVELY FED THEM THEIR BLOTTED MEDICINE
ALRIGHT, CLAM UP, YOU SODS! YOU'RE BEGINNING TO DRIVE ME CRAZY!
ONLY HATE SHONE IN THE SAMARESE EYES. SHELDON KNEW THAT ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NEAR DEAD, THEY COULD JUMP HIM AT ANY GIVEN TIME

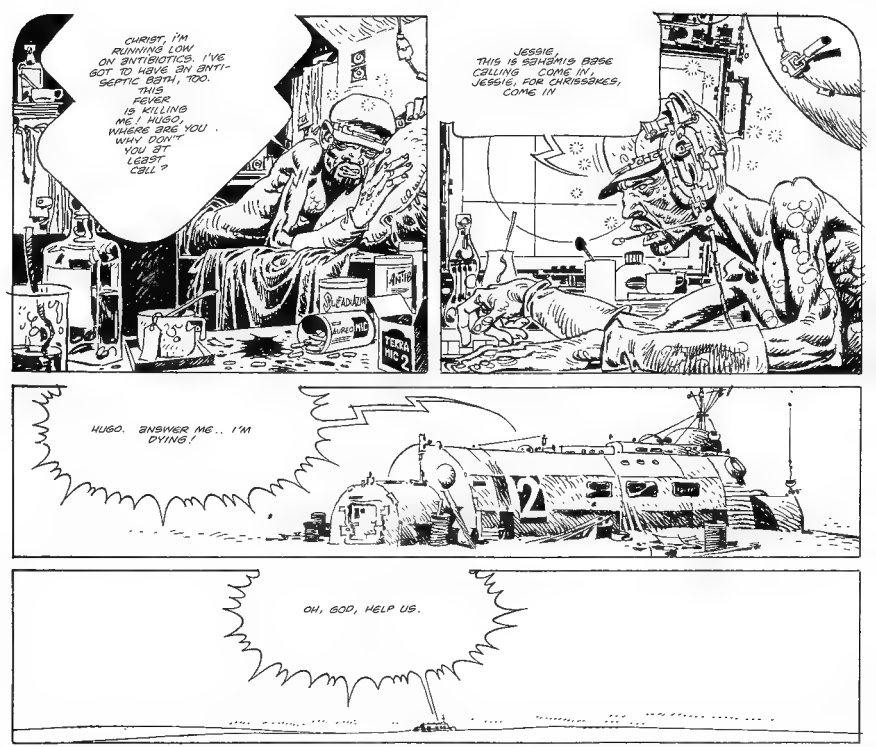
HANGAH! GET THAT CORPSE OUT OF HERE! GOD KNOWS WHAT DISEASES SHE'S SPREADING JUST LYING THERE!
DAMN YOU! DON'T YOU HEAR ME? GET HER OUT OF HERE!
CROCK!
COME ON, YOU BASTARD! YOU WANT ME TO BREAK YOUR TEETH OR SOMETHING?!

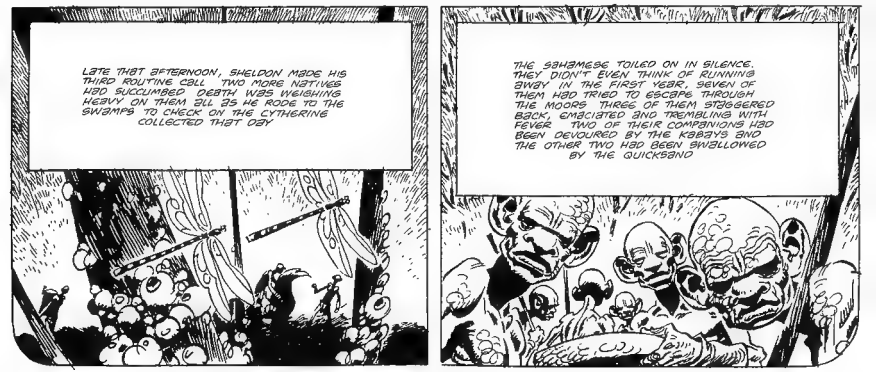
SWINE!

THAT GUY AT THE BACK THERE... THE ONE NEXT TO THE POLE! HE'S ON HIS WAY OUT, TOO. DRAG HIM OUT!? HERE AS SOON AS HE'S BOUGHT IT! WE NEED ANOTHER LEAN-TO HANGAR, GET TO WORK ON IT YOU'RE ALL SCUM--JEEZ THIS PLACE STINKS!

WHAT ARE YOU WHINING ABOUT, BLOB? IF YOU DON'T CLIMB UP, YOUR PAL WILL PACK IT IN, TOO. DO YOU HEAR ME? DO YOU WANT ME TO SHUT YOU UP?

THE "MAN FROM THE STARS" WAS AS ILL, IF NOT MORE THAN THE NATIVES HE HAD ONCE CARED FOR. HE COULDN'T BELIEVE THE THINGS HE SAID--HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW BAD OFF HE REALLY WAS.


CHRIST, I'M RUNNING LOW ON ANTIBIOTICS. I'VE GOT TO HAVE AN ANTI-SEPTIC BATH, TOO. THIS FEVER IS KILLING ME! HUGO, WHERE ARE YOU . WHY DON'T YOU AT LEAST CALL?
ANTIB
TERRA MIC-2
JESSIE, THIS IS SHAMUS BASE CALLING COME IN, JESSIE, FOR CHRISSAKES, COME IN
HUGO. ANSWER ME.. I'M DYING!
2
OH, GOD, HELP US.


LATE THAT AFTERNOON, SHELDON MADE HIS THIRD ROUTINE CALL TWO MORE NATIVES HAD SUCCUMBED. DEATH WAS WEIGHING HEAVY ON THEM ALL AS WE RODE TO THE SWAMPS TO CHECK ON THE CYTHERINE COLLECTED THAT DAY
THE SHAMESE TOILED ON IN SILENCE. THEY DIDN'T EVEN THINK OF RUNNING AWAY IN THE FIRST YEAR, SEVEN OF THEM HAD TRIED TO ESCAPE THROUGH THE MOORS. THREE OF THEM STAGGERED BACK, EMACIATED AND TREMBLING WITH FEVER. TWO OF THEIR COMPANIONS HAD BEEN DEVOURED BY THE KRAAYS AND THE OTHER TWO HAD BEEN SWALLOWED BY THE QUICKSAND

NO, THE SIAMESE WEREN'T THINKING OF RUNNING AWAY THEY WERE MERELY WAITING
WAITING
WAITING
AND WAITING
HUGO, HUGO ! WHY DON'T YOU CALL ME ? WHERE ARE YOU I'M SO SICK, MAN I'M GONNA DIE
WHO'S THAT ?
IT'S THEM, THEY'RE WATCHING ME ! THEY HATE ME BECAUSE I NEVER SLEEP EVERYDAY THEY BECOME MORE DANGEROUS AND WILY, NATURALLY THEY EXPECT TO GET ME ONE OF THESE DAYS
ALRIGHT ! SO LET'S SEE WHO'S THE BOSS AROUND HERE !
I'LL SHOW THEM

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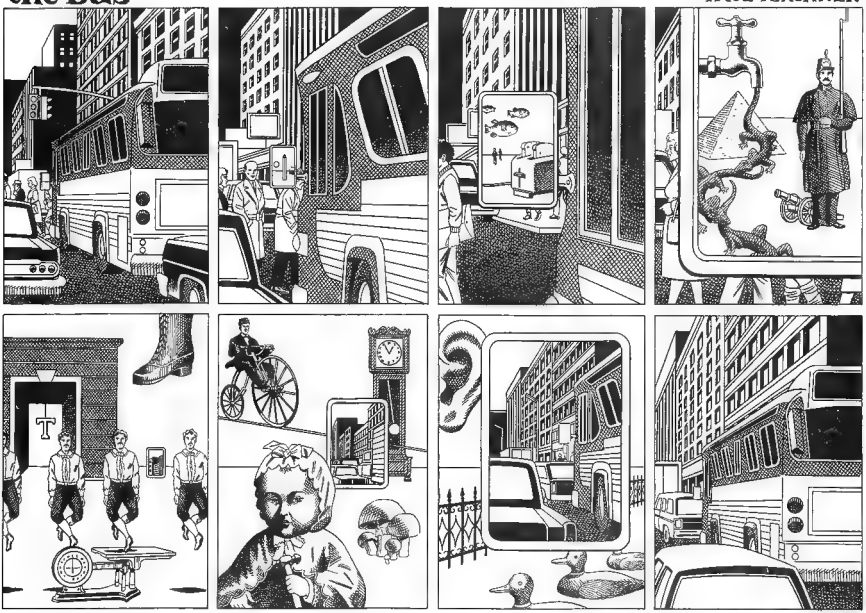

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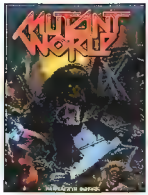

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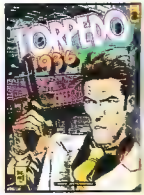

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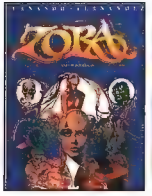

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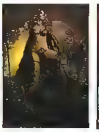
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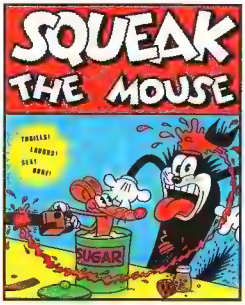

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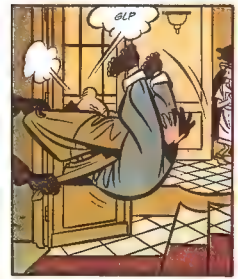
THE SNOW STARTED FALLING AROUND 9 O'CLOCK
Rue Edouard VII rue Fritz Kahlenberg
ELEPHANT CEMETERY

THE CLUB LOOKS REAL PRIVATE ! DON'T THINK THE DOORMAN WILL LET YOU IN !
I HAVE TO GET IN THERE IN ORDER TO MEET THORPE. I'VE GOT TO DO IT !

GOOD EVENING, NGRONDO.
CLUB COLONIAL
PRIVE

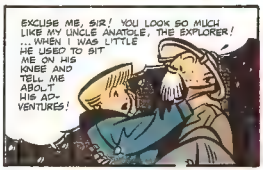

GLP

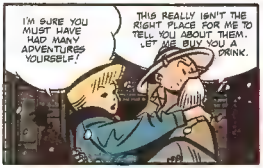
MY NAME IS JOSEPH-MARIE !
ECO
SPAIN

STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE. I'LL TRY AND GET YOU IN !

OOOH...

OH, GOD ! ...


EXCUSE ME, SIR ! YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE MY UNCLE ANATOLE, THE EXPLORER ! ... WHEN I WAS LITTLE HE USED TO SIT ME ON HIS KNEE AND TELL ME ABOUT HIS ADVENTURES !

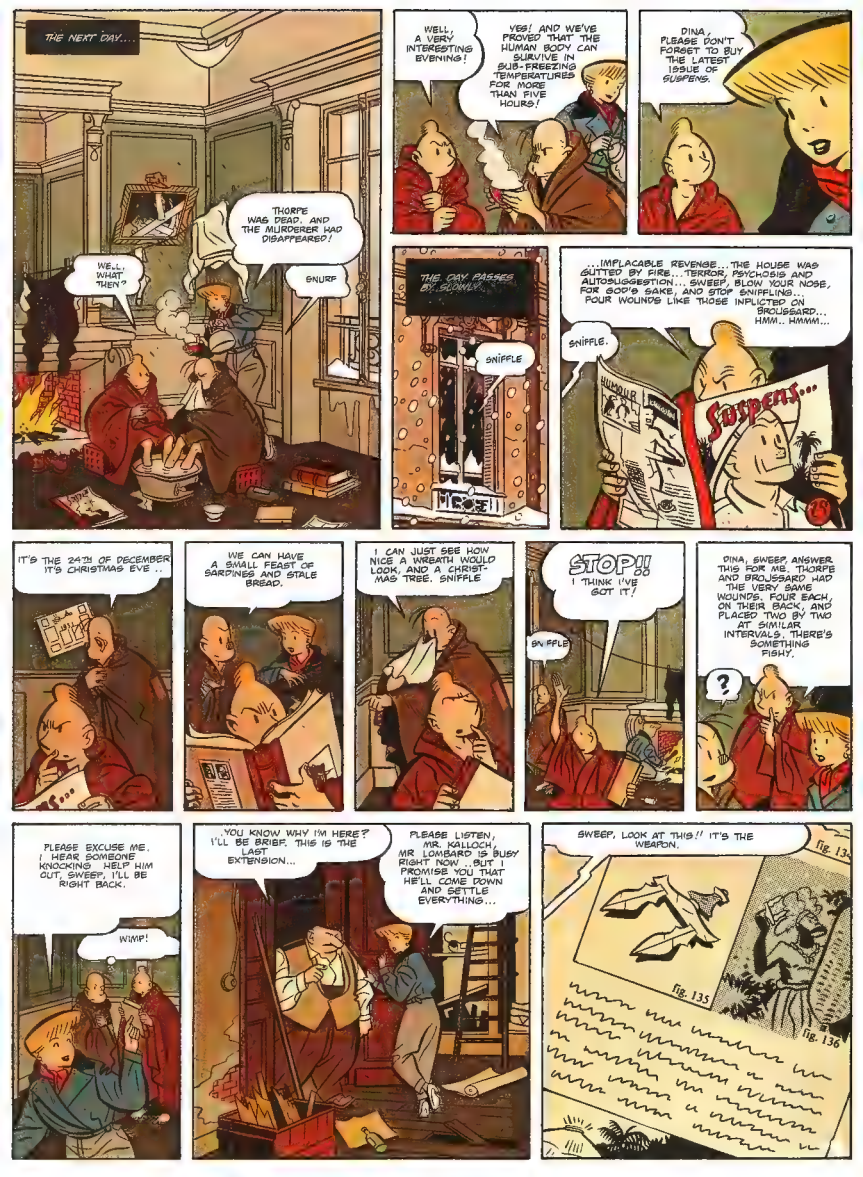

I'M SURE YOU MUST HAVE HAD MANY ADVENTURES YOURSELF !
THIS REALLY ISN'T THE RIGHT PLACE FOR ME TO TELL YOU ABOUT THEM. LET ME BUY YOU A DRINK.

GOOD EVENING, JOSEPH-MARIE!
THE SNOW-FLAKES LOOK BIGGER AND IT'S BEGINNING TO STICK!
WHAT'S DINA UP TO?. IT'S BEEN OVER AN HOUR...
... I AIMED MY GUN AT THE MASS BEFORE ME AND SHOT... WHEN THE SMOKE LIFTED I SAW THAT I HAD K'LLED THREE LIONS, FIVE GAZELLES, TWO BUFFALOES, TEN GIRAFFES, FOUR HERONS, ONE GORILLA AND TWO CROCODILES...
HOW AM I EVER GOING TO GET RID OF THIS CRASHING BORE!??
GOOD EVENING, MISS, GOOD EVENING SAMUEL. PLEASE EXCUSE MY INTER-RUPTION BUT, HAVE YOU SEEN THORPE ANYWHERE?
THORPE?
THORPE? WHY, HE'S AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE!
WE HAD AGREED TO MEET HERE TONIGHT, BUT HE HASN'T SHOWN UP YET!
THERE'S A PHONE CALL FOR YOU, SIR. IT'S MR. THORPE.
HA, FINALLY!
HELLO?
WHERE WAS I?... OH, YES...
HELLO? THORPE! I'M QUITE SORE, OLD GUY! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU ALL EVENING AND . WHAT?
?
...HE'S...HE'S FOLLOWING ME... LINOTT! HE WANTS TO KILL ME! ...HE'S INCREDIBLY STRONG... HE'S SEEKING REVENGE...!...I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO HIDE!
BUT?. WHO'S THREATENING YOU, THORPE?
!.. I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM...HE TRIED TO KILL ME LAST NIGHT... I MANAGED TO ESCAPE...I THINK I MIGHT HAVE WOUNDED HIM...
...BROUSSARD IS DEAD AND NOW IT'S MY TURN!! DO...DO YOU UNDER-STAND, LINOTT??!!
TAKE THIS, YOU DIRTY MONKEY, I SAID...
HIM... IT WOULD BE BEST IF I COULD TALK TO YOU IN PERSON. WHERE ARE YOU NOW?
AT THE REGENT, A CAFÉ ON MULE-STEP STREET. I'LL WAIT FOR YOU, LINOTT, BUT PLEASE HURRY! FOR THE GRACE OF GOD!!
TELEPHONE

CALM DOWN, RICHARD, DON'T LET YOUR IMAGINATION GET THE BETTER OF YOU!
OH! JUST
FOLLOW ME, MY CAR IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!
EX. EXCUSE ME, SIR!
COGNAC, PLEASE!
TOILETTES
TELEPHONE
YOU DON'T LOOK WELL...! HOPE YOU'RE NOT COMING DOWN WITH SOME SORT OF EXOTIC FLU...
DO. DO YOU KNOW THAT GUY?
NO, HE CAME IN RIGHT BEHIND YOU. I WOULD SAY HE'S A TRAVELING SALESMAN, PROBABLY ON LEAVE BECAUSE OF HIS ARM... I'M A PRETTY GOOD JUDGE OF PEOPLE...
I GUESSED RIGHT AWAY THAT YOU CAME FROM THE COLONIES! THERE'S NOTHING EXCEPTIONAL ABOUT THIS, JUST A LITTLE INTUITION.
SIR...
AAH!!
JESUS, YOU'RE JUMPY! DO YOU HAVE A MATCH?
A MATCH.. SURE. YES!

STOP! THE REGENT IS BACK THERE!
BRASSERIE
BAR
OH HELL! MY MUSTACHE IS FROZEN!
LE REGENT
LINOTT!! FINALLY!
I MUST BE CAREFUL..HE FEELS ILL AT EASE...I'VE BLOWN HIS COVER...
THORPE! WHAT'S GOING ON? YOU LOOK TERRIBLE..
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? ...I'M JUST FINE! HA, HA!
!...I WAS TALKING...JUST IMAGINE THAT THIS GENTLEMAN HERE HAS NEVER BEEN TO AFRICA. IT'S A PITY, ISN'T IT, LINOTT? AFRICA IS MAYBE THE MOST FASCINATING OF ALL THE CONTINENTS.
?
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! I'M THE ONE WHO CAN TELL YOU ALL ABOUT AFRICA AND IT'S MAGIC. WELL, ONE DAY...
GOOD GOD, LINOTT!! TRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE MURDERER IS STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!
ANYTHING TO DRINK?
I LIKE YOUR STYLE, STRANGER!
IT'S ON ME!
THORPE IS BEHAVING VERY STRANGELY!
?
THORPE HAS EITHER GONE CRAZY OR IS TRYING TO MAKE A FOOL OF ME!
HOW CAN I ALERT LINOTT WITHOUT ALERTING THE OTHER GUY?
YOUR COGNAC...
TH..THANK...YOU.
...SO THE ANIOTDS THREW THEMSELVES AT ME. THERE WERE OVER A HUNDRED! THANKFULLY, I DID WHAT ALL GOOD COLONIALS DO IN THESE OCCASIONS; I KEPT MY COOL...
...I TOOK MY RAST GASSER 9mm OUT OF MY POCKET. IT'S AN AUSTRIAN GUN... I HAVE CHERISHED IT EVER SINCE THEN...
THE CAT IS PLAYING WITH THE MOUSE... AND WHAT IF THE COGNAC WAS POISONED?.. NO. THAT'S RIDICULOUS.!!
AREN'T YOU GOING TO TASTE YOUR DRINK?
YOUR HEALTH, THORPE!
!..I WAS WAITING...FOR THE COGNAC TO WARM UP...
THORPE TAKES A SIP FROM HIS GLASS, UTTERS A HORRIBLE CRY AND FALLS TO THE GROUND, APPARENTLY IN GREAT PAIN...
AAAARH

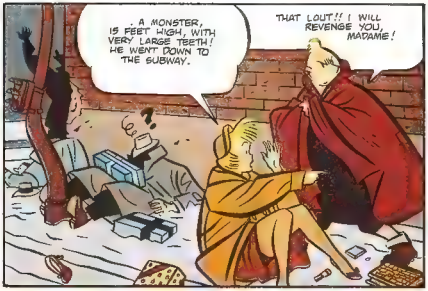
LINOTT! IT'S... HE'S THE MURDERER!!... HE...HE TRIED TO POISON ME!
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE HIM... HE JUST CHOKED ON THE STUFF... THEY SAY THAT ALCOHOL CAN KILL YOU, BUT...
HUMM
AHH! IT'S BURNING ME UP!! I CAN'T STAND IT ANYMORE!!
GO DRINK SOME WATER! OR TRY TO THROW UP!! HURRY, THORPE!
GO TO THE BATHROOM AND TRY TO RECOVER. I'LL CALL A DOCTOR.
TOILETTES TELEPHONE
COUGH COUGH COUGH
GREAT! AND YOU, STAY WHERE YOU ARE! MY RAST GASSER WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING MANY A HOLE IN PEOPLE I DIDN'T LIKE THE LOOKS OF!
BUT..
CLIC
I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE!
GOOD LORD! I THINK THAT THIS CITIZEN'S CONSCIENCE IS CERTAINLY NOT LILY WHITE!
TOILETTES TELEPHONE
COUGH COUGH COUGH
...PLEASE BRING A DOCTOR WITH YOU, BUT BE CAUTIOUS ...I HAVE A GOOD BUSINESS ...HARDWORKING, HONEST PEOPLE...
THORPE IS REALLY BEHAVING STRANGELY... FUNNY, I DON'T HEAR HIM COUGHING ANYMORE!
WHERE DID HE GO NOW!??
THORPE??


THE NEXT DAY...
WELL, WHAT THEN?
THORPE WAS DEAD. AND THE MURDERER HAD DISAPPEARED!
SNURF
WELL, A VERY INTERESTING EVENING!
YES! AND WE'VE PROVED THAT THE HUMAN BODY CAN SURVIVE IN SUB-FREEZING TEMPERATURES FOR MORE THAN FIVE HOURS!
DINA, PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO BUY THE LATEST ISSUE OF SUSPENS.
THE DAY PASSES BY SLOWLY...
SNIFFLE
...IMPLACABLE REVENGE... THE HOUSE WAS GUTTED BY FIRE... TERROR, PSYCHOSIS AND AUTOSUGGESTION... SWEEP, BLOW YOUR NOSE, FOR GOD'S SAKE, AND STOP SNIFFLING... FOUR WOUNDS LIKE THOSE INFLICTED ON BROUSSARD... HMM.. HMMM...
SNIFFLE.
Suspens...
IT'S THE 24TH OF DECEMBER. IT'S CHRISTMAS EVE ..
TS...
WE CAN HAVE A SMALL FEAST OF SARDINES AND STALE BREAD.
I CAN JUST SEE HOW NICE A WREATH WOULD LOOK, AND A CHRISTMAS TREE. SNIFFLE
STOP!! I THINK I'VE GOT IT!
SNIFFLE
DINA, SWEEP, ANSWER THIS FOR ME. THORPE AND BROUSSARD HAD THE VERY SAME WOUNDS. FOUR EACH, ON THEIR BACK, AND PLACED TWO BY TWO AT SIMILAR INTERVALS. THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY.
?
PLEASE EXCUSE ME. I HEAR SOMEONE KNOCKING. HELP HIM OUT, SWEEP, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
WIMP!
...YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE? I'LL BE BRIEF. THIS IS THE LAST EXTENSION...
PLEASE LISTEN, MR. KALLOCH. MR LOMBARD IS BUSY RIGHT NOW .. BUT I PROMISE YOU THAT HE'LL COME DOWN AND SETTLE EVERYTHING...
SWEEP, LOOK AT THIS!! IT'S THE WEAPON.
fig. 134
fig. 135
fig. 136

ANOTHER PROBLEM! KALLOCH WILL KICK US OUT TONIGHT IF WE DON'T GIVE HIM THE RENT FOR THIS MONTH!
THAT DOES IT! MY CLOTHES AREN'T EVEN DRY!
BAH! I'M SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO REASON WITH MR. KALLOCH! LET ME TAKE CARE OF THIS.
I'M GOING TO TOUCH HIS HIDDEN CHRISTIAN FEELINGS. 2000 YEARS AGO, IN BETHLEHEM, A CHILD WAS BORN IN A STABLE, ETC...ETC...
HE'S WAITI IS FOR YOU IN IS ROOM
WHERE THE HELL IS HE, MY TORTURER.
HEY! A BANGOBANGO TWO-BLADE DAGGER!
IT'S BEAUTIFUL... BENEATH HIS ROUGH EXTERIOR, MR KALLOCH REALLY IS A CONNOISSEUR...
OUCH!! IT'S REALLY SHARP!
MR. KALLOCH?!

PLEASE EXCUSE MY INTRUSION, MR. KALLOCH! I CAME TO TALK ABOUT THE RENT.
YOU MIGHT NOT BE AWARE OF THIS, BUT AN ANCIENT MEDIEVAL LAW FORBIDS LANDLORDS TO EVICT THEIR TENANTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WINTER. NOW...
CRAC
HEM.. PLEASE DON'T GET ANGRY FOR SO LITTLE... !...!...WILL PAY... ! FROMIBE !
...IN SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA A CYCLONE OF UNPRECEDENTED FORCE.
WITH SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH THE LUG BEGINS DESTROYING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT...
BROM
CRAAC
THE MONSTER ADVANCES-THREATENINGLY TOWARDS FREDDY! SUDDENLY HE STOPS, TREMBLING, AS IF OVERCOME BY DIZZYNESS...
SLOWLY AND WITH DIFFICULTY HE BENDS DOWN AND PICKS UP THE DAGGER WHICH HAD FALLEN FROM FREDDY'S HAND.
AND STARTS WALKING HEAVILY AWAY.
BLOOD!
AND A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR LISTENERS!

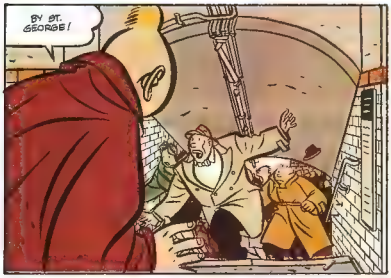
MR KALLOCH OWES ME AN EXPLANATION.

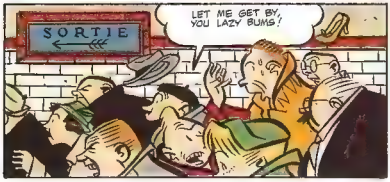

... A MONSTER, 15 FEET HIGH, WITH VERY LARGE TEETH! HE WENT DOWN TO THE SUBWAY.
THAT LOUT!! I WILL REVENGE YOU, MADAME!

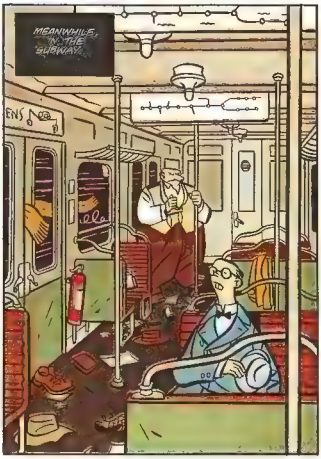
THE OLD L'ELEPHANT

SORTIE RUE DE LYON

DON'T PUSH!
THERE'S NO ROOM!
LET ME IN!
WHAT THE HELL ..?
GOOD GOD!!


BY ST. GEORGE!


SORTIE
LET ME GET BY, YOU LAZY BUMS!

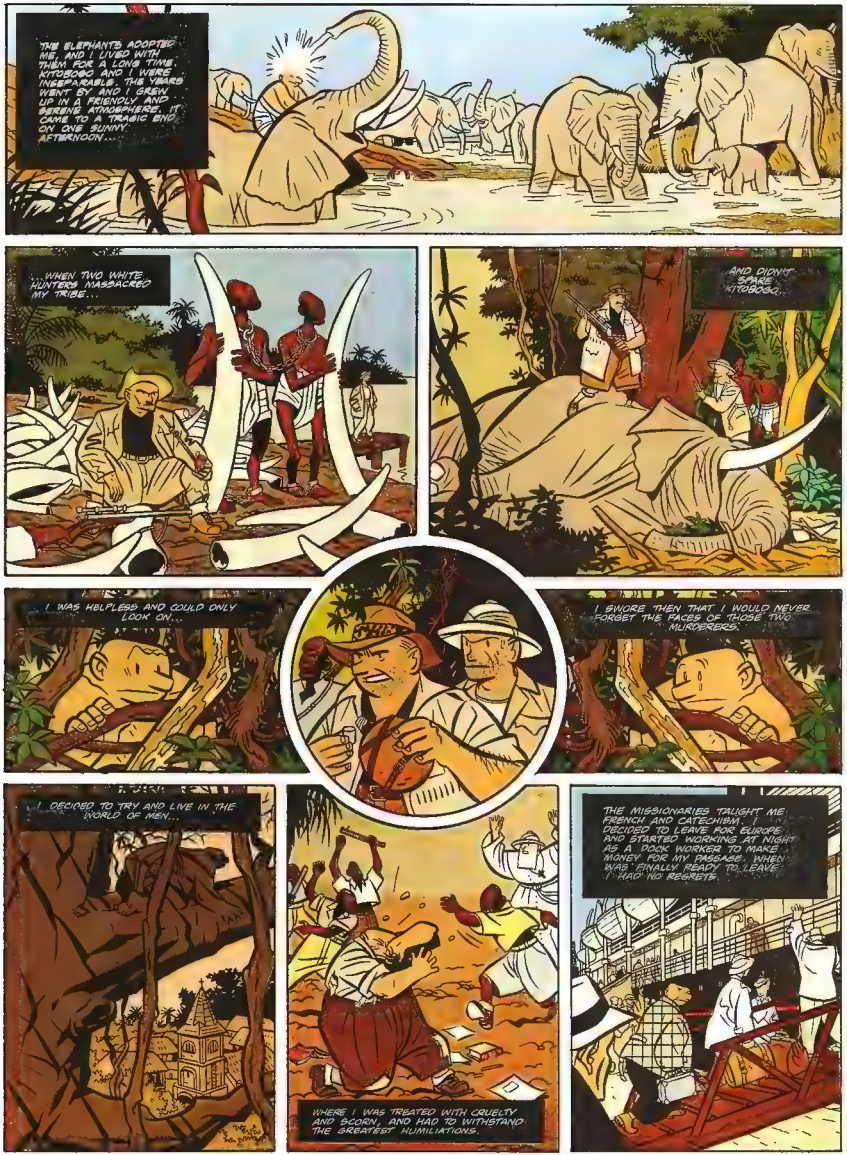

MEANWHILE, IN THE SUBWAY...

BIZARRE!! THERE'S NOBODY IN THIS CAR... DID I GET ON A FIRST CLASS CAR?

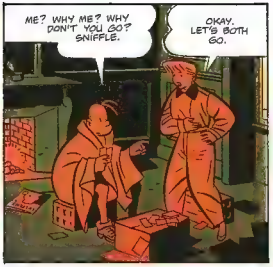
HE TOOK THE CHATEAU DE VINCENNES LINE. THERE ARE FIVE STOPS BEFORE THE END OF THE LINE.
RATP
BASTILLE
IF HE GOT OFF AT ANY ONE OF THEM, SOMEBODY WILL HAVE NOTICED HIM.
GARE DE LYON
REUILLY DI
NATION
PTE DE VINCENI
TOURELLE
THIS IS THE LAST STOP. HE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER.
VINCENNES
METRO
MORE BLOOD!
THE RAT ELEPHANT
HE MUST HAVE FALLEN HERE! DID HE FAINT? OR IS HE DEAD? WHERE'S THE BODY?

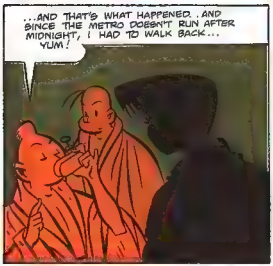
WAIT! HIS TRACKS LEAD TO THAT HOUSE.
GRACIOUS, MY POOR FRIEND!... YOU MUST BE COLD AND HUNGRY. COME IN. AND BE MY GUEST.
?
I'M ALWAYS IN SEARCH OF SPIRITUAL TRUTHS... ALAS, I KNOW MY PRETENSIONS AND I'M SURE YOU HAVE A LOT TO TEACH ME.. YOU AND THE OTHER POOR SOUL THAT I FOUND DYING IN THE SNOW..
KALLOCH!
PLEASE FILL THIS BOWL WITH HOT WATER AND COME AND HELP ME TAKE CARE OF THIS MAN.
IT'S AN UGLY WOUND! IF IT HAD ONLY BEEN TAKEN CARE OF RIGHT AWAY!.. HE WILL HAVE TO STAY IN BED FOR A FEW DAYS . I'LL SLEEP ON THE FLOOR...
ARE YOU GOING TO LET HIM STAY HERE? HE... HMM...IS DANGEROUS!
...HE'S ALREADY KILLED AT LEAST TWO PEOPLE AND...
ENOUGH! TONIGHT IS CHRISTMAS EVE. FORGET YOUR GRUDGES, MY SON.
GOD IS IN EVERYMAN'S HEART!

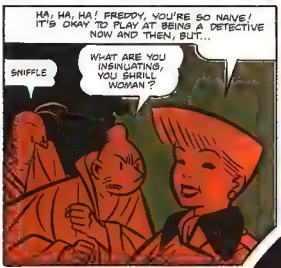
DON'T MOVE OR I'LL KILL YOU!
BE CAREFUL, MY SON. YOUR WOUND WILL OPEN AGAIN.
LISTEN TO ME...
IT'S ALL OVER, KALLOCH! I KNOW EVERYTHING, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. YOU KILLED BROUSSARD AND THORPE IN ORDER TO DISCOVER THE SECRET OF THE ELEPHANT CEMETERY!
LISTEN TO ME, BY GOD!
YOU TOOK CARE OF ME AND FOR THAT I'M VERY GRATEFUL... I FEEL THAT MY STRENGTH IS LEAVING ME, AND THAT IT IS TIME FOR ME TO TELL YOU OF MY EXTRAORDINARY LIFE WHICH BEGAN IN AFRICA, IN A VERY WILD REGION. MY PARENTS ABANDONED ME WHEN I WAS VERY LITTLE...
WHAAA
LAUGH, LAUGH, LAUGH!
AAAH!
IT WAS MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH MY FUTURE BROTHER. MUCH LATER, THE BANGOBANGOS, WHO WERE MORTALLY AFRAID OF HIM, CHRISTENED HIM "KYTOBOGO", WHICH IN THEIR LANGUAGE MEANS "THE DESTROYER".
LAUGH, LAUGH, LAUGH, GIGGLE.


THE ELEPHANTS ADOPTED ME, AND I LIVED WITH THEM FOR A LONG TIME. KITOBOKO AND I WERE INSEPARABLE. THE YEARS WENT BY AND I GREW UP IN A FRIENDLY AND SERENE ATMOSPHERE. IT CAME TO A TRAGIC END ON ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON...
...WHEN TWO WHITE HUNTERS MASSACRED MY TRIBE...
AND DIDN'T SPARE KITOBOKO...
I WAS HELPLESS AND COULD ONLY LOOK ON...
I SWORE THEN THAT I WOULD NEVER FORGET THE FACES OF THOSE TWO MURDERERS.
I DECIDED TO TRY AND LIVE IN THE WORLD OF MEN...
WHERE I WAS TREATED WITH CRUELTY AND SCORN, AND HAD TO WITHSTAND THE GREATEST HUMILIATIONS.
THE MISSIONARIES TAUGHT ME FRENCH AND CATECHISM. I DECIDED TO LEAVE FOR EUROPE AND STARTED WORKING AT NIGHT AS A DOCK WORKER TO MAKE MONEY FOR MY PASSAGE. WHEN I WAS FINALLY READY TO LEAVE, I HAD NO REGRETS.

I FOUND WORK AS A DOORMAN. ONE DAY, BY CHANCE, I SAW BROUSSARD AND THORPE. FROM THAT MOMENT ONWARDS, I WAS OBSESSED WITH THE IDEA OF REVENGE!
TAKE MY CLOAK--YOU WILL CATCH COLD.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO US?
AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE FIRST BELLS OF MIDNIGHT RANG FROM A NEARBY CHURCH...
DONG
DONG
THE MURDEROUS EXPRESSION DISAPPEARED FROM THE GIANTS FACE--HE STOOD AS IF PETRIFIED, HIS EYES FIXED ON A FAR OFF POINT..
DONG
DONG
DONG
DONG
AND SUDDENLY STEPPED OUT OF THE ROOM LIKE A SLEEPWALKER
DONG
DONG
...AND WALKED WITH HESITANT STEPS DOWN THE CORRIDOR.
DONG
DONG
KALLOCH! WHERE ARE YOU GOING!!?? WE MUST STOP HIM!
DON'T DO THAT, IT'S CHRISTMAS! LET'S RESPECT HIM.. AND PRAY FOR HIM.
DONG
DONG






HA, HA, HA! FREDDY, YOU'RE SO NAIVE! IT'S OKAY TO PLAY AT BEING A DETECTIVE NOW AND THEN, BUT...
SNIFFLE
WHAT ARE YOU INSINUATING, YOU SHRILL WOMAN?

I TAKE BACK ALL I SAID.
I AGREE. LET'S PRETEND NOTHING HAPPENED.
THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW WE WILL CASH UNCLE ISIDORE'S CHECK AND EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY, UNTIL NEXT MONTH.

When an elephant feels that his life is about to end, he leaves his clan and goes on his way, all alone. He is very dangerous if taunted, and woe be it that somebody cross his path.

FIN

Some scholars say that the elephant goes to a place that only he knows, following some mysterious instinct. He goes to die with his ancestors, in the fabulous and mythical ***ELEPHANT CEMETERY.***

FIN

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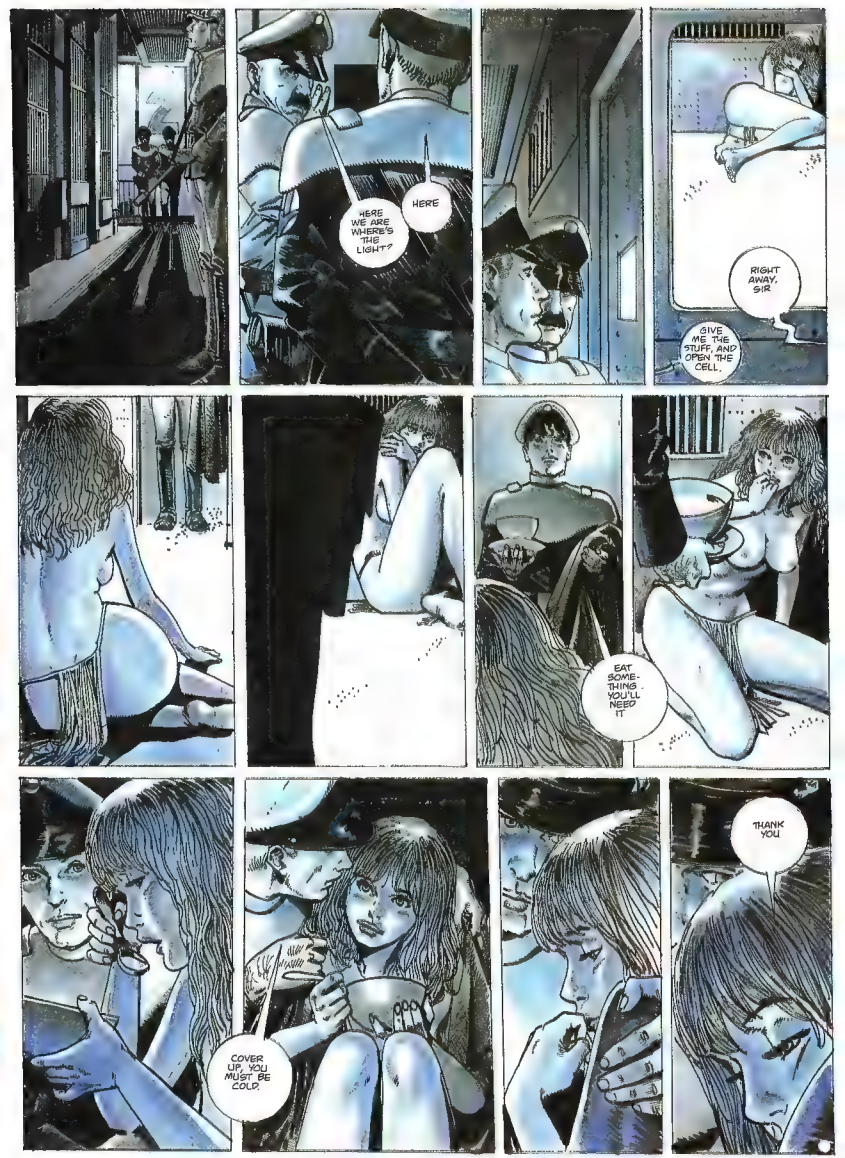
SLOT MACHINE

by Trillo. Illustrated by Altuna

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
SOB.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
EVERY-THINGS THE MATTER!
WHAT?
WHAT?
AT LAST, I'VE BEGUN
TO REALIZE THAT YOU'RE A SELFISH PRICK!
YOU HAVE ONLY ONE PERSON IN MIND...
...WHEN WE MAKE LOVE, AND THAT'S YOU!
SEX
I KNOW ALL ABOUT THIS, 'CAUSE
..I'VE BEEN READING A LOT OF BOOKS I'M JUST
clitoris
Where is Sex?
.. A TOY FOR YOU AN OBJECT! I'VE NEVER HAD AN ORGASM!
BUT DO YOU CARE ABOUT ME, AND MY NEEDS?
NO! WHAT ABOUT MY G-SPOT?
MY PLEASURE!
NO!
DO YOU CARE?
NO!
YOU DON'T KNOW A THING!

POP
OH, THAT'S GREAT!
HAHAHA!
THAT'S GREAT!
ZONE
STAIRWAY
THE MAJOR IS HERE EVERYTHING SET?
YES, SIR AS REQUESTED THE ANDROMEDA PRISONER IS FREE
AND SHE IS QUITE READY FOR THE STIFFEST OF PUNISHMENTS
SLOW STARVATION? SOLITARY CONFINEMENT?
THE MAJOR WILL WORK OUT THE SPECIFICS
HE'LL HAVE TO GET THE INFO OUTTA HER
GOOD!


HERE WE ARE WHERE'S THE LIGHT?
HERE
GIVE ME THE STUFF, AND OPEN THE CELL.
RIGHT AWAY, SIR
EAT SOME-THING. YOU'LL NEED IT
COVER UP. YOU MUST BE COLD.
THANK YOU

BUT
OWW.
YOU'RE HURTING ME!
WHAT
AHH!
I TOLD YOU.
I'LL BE BACK IN 48 HOURS!

SHE'S HAD THREE MONTHS OF TREAT-MENT
STAT
PRIS
IS SHE READY YET?
I THINK SO, BUT WOMEN TEND TO BE HARDER TO BREAK THEN MEN
HA! HOW YOU TALK! MEN ARE THE SUPERIOR RACE, AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!
2 level
OH!
OOHHH!
OH, GOD!
PLEASE, GO ON
HIT ME IF YOU MUST!
GO ON!
BUT DON'T LEAVE ME!

I'LL TELL
YOU EVERY-THING!
I'LL CONFESS ALL ABOUT THE ANDRO-MEDA
I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU WANT.
I'LL BARE ALL
YOU CAN HURT ME
DON'T GO
...JUST DON'T LEAVE ME
DON'T..
PRRR
OH, MY SCORE!
IF ONLY ISABELLE WAS LIKE THAT!
MEN ARE SUPERIOR TO WOMEN! WILL SHE NEVER LEARN?
MAY-BE
PLING!

PORNO SUPERMART
PEEP SHOW
OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY
SEX FILMS
PARKING
thank you! FOR SHOPPING IN THE PORNO SUPERMART
PLEASE DROP IN AGAIN SOON
EXIT
SPATTLE
THAT YOU?
ER YES, DEAR
WHERE YOU BEEN? AT THAT DISGUSTING SLOT MACHINE, I BET!
WELL, NO ! I JUST ERRR
YOU... AND YOUR GAMES!
ROARRR! YOUR TIME HAS COME, WOMAN!
YOU ARE MY SLAVE AND YOU WILL LOVE IT!
OF ALL THE
KNEEL!
YOU'RE NUTS! COME ON, GET READY FOR DINNER!
SHE'S NO FUN!!
CARLOS PELLO HORACIO FERRER ©
FIN

THE PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT YOU THE MA(
THE RADIO SHOWS, THE BOOKS, THE COM
NOW GIVE YOU THE ONE THING YOU REAL

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(ZINE, THE MOVIES,
)Y ALBUMS...
.ISHOULD NOT DO WITHOUT... CLOTHING.

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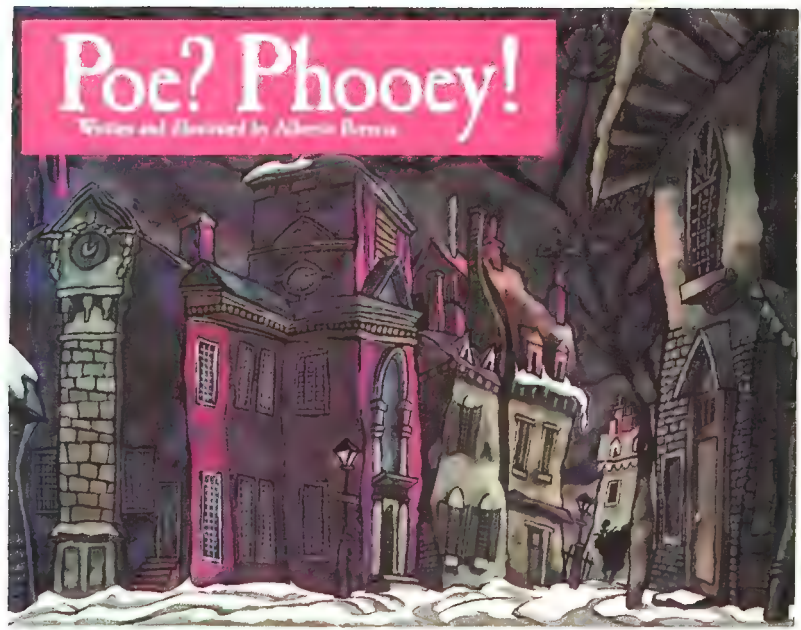
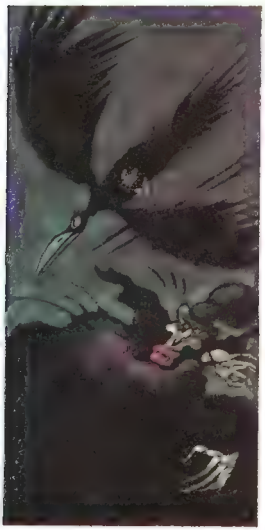
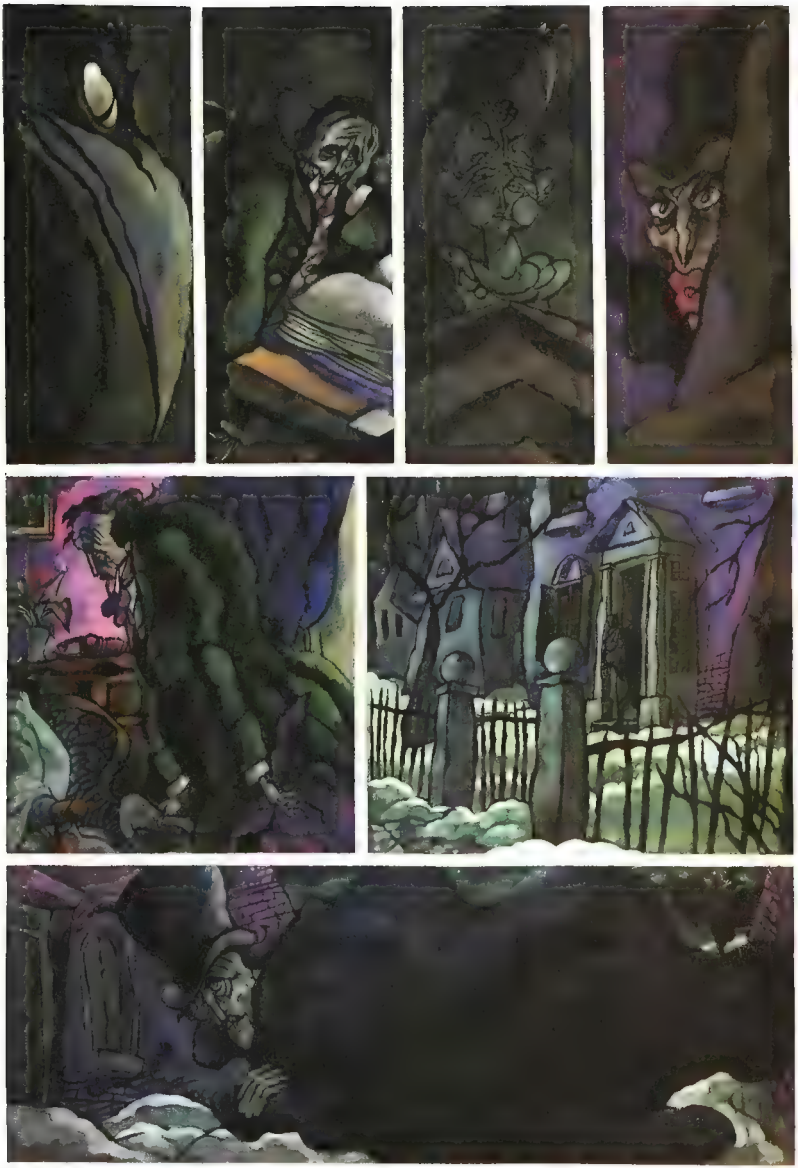
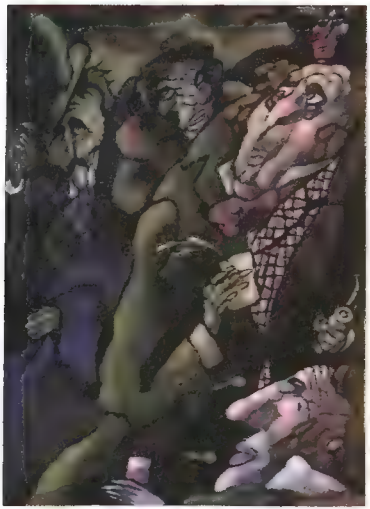
Poe? Phooey!

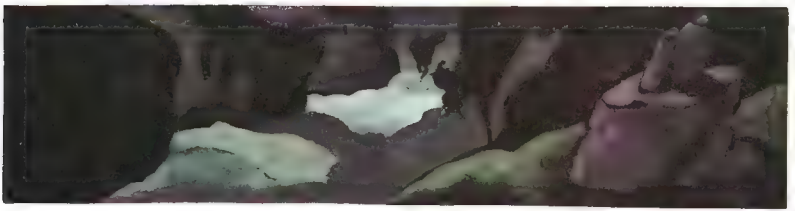
Written and Illustrated by Alberto Ponticelli











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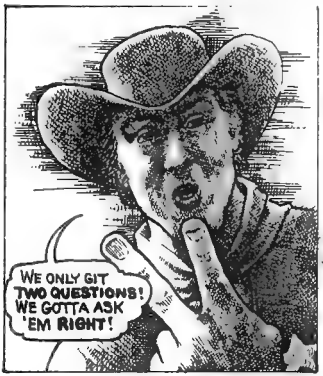
WELCOME, DEAR READER. WE ARE JUST IN TIME TO JOIN THE SHERIFF AND HIS SEARCH PARTY AND TO FIND THEM PONDERING A CLASSIC PROBLEM. IN SO DOING, THEY COME FACE-TO-FACE WITH SOMETHING ALTOGETHER NEW TO MOST OF THEM: THE GRIM SPECTRE OF LOGICAL THOUGHT.

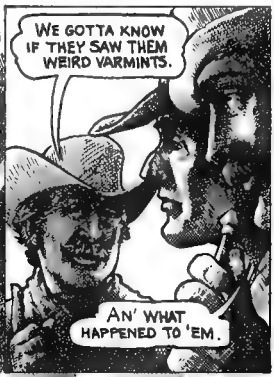
TEX☆ARCANA

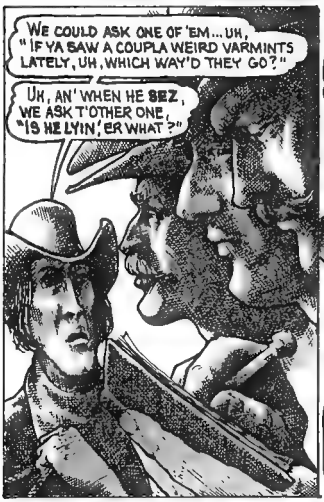
MEETS THE TOAST OF EUROPE

©1982 Jack Ruddy

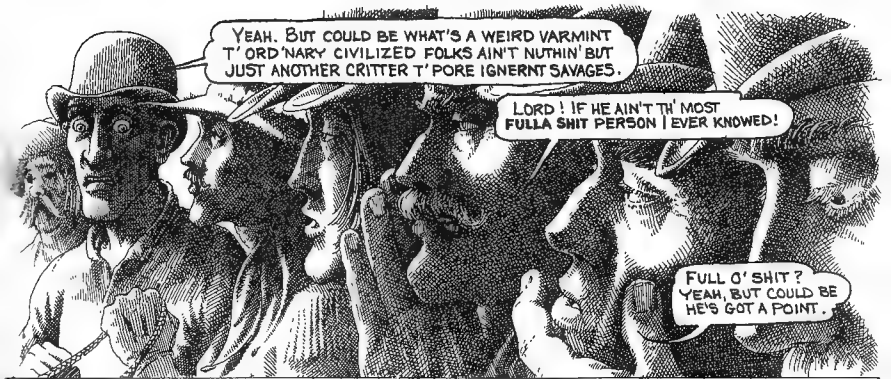
PART 24

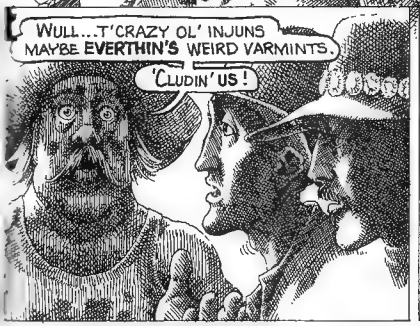


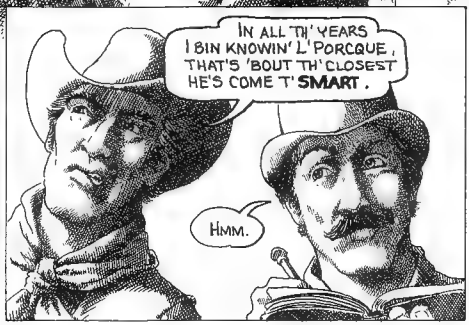


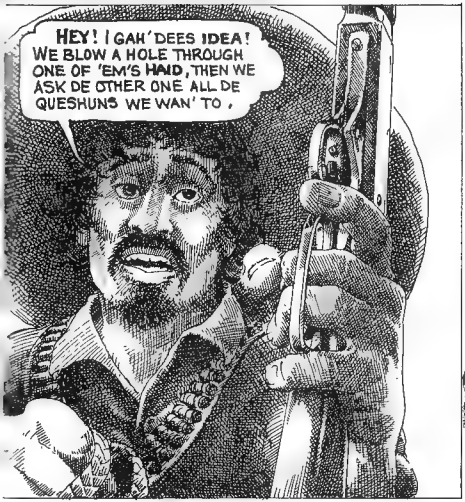

WE COULD ASK ONE OF 'EM... UH, "IF YA SAW A COUPLA WEIRD VARMINTS LATELY, UH, WHICH WAY'D THEY GO?"
UH, AN' WHEN HE SEZ, WE ASK T'OTHER ONE, "IS HE LYIN', ER WHAT?"

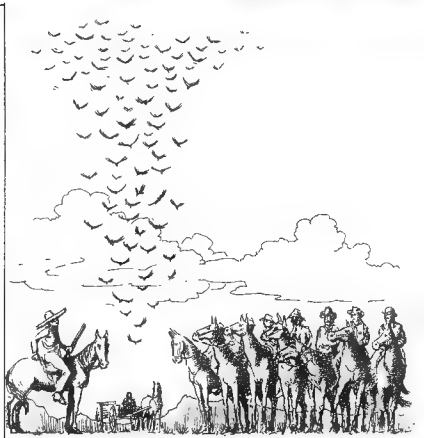
NO, 'CAUSE WHAT IF TH' FIRST ONE TELLS US TH' TRUTH AN' TH' SECOND ONE SAYS TH' FIRST IS LYIN'.
HOW WE GONNA KNOW?
YEAH. THAT'S SO.
WELL, THEN, WE COULD ASK ONE OF 'EM HOW MANY WEIRD LI'L VARMINTS HAS HE SEEN LATELY. IF 'N HE SAYS TWO, WE'LL ASK HIM WHICH WAY THEY WENT. BUT IF'N HE SAYS ONE, ER ELEVEN, ER A HUNNERD 'N' TEN, THEN WE'LL ASK HIS BROTHER.


YEAH. BUT COULD BE WHAT'S A WEIRD VARMINT T' ORD'NARY CIVILIZED FOLKS AIN'T NUTHIN' BUT JUST ANOTHER CRITTER T' PORE IGNERNT SAVAGES.
LORD! IF HE AIN'T TH' MOST FULLA SHIT PERSON I EVER KNOWED!
FULL O' SHIT? YEAH, BUT COULD BE HE'S GOT A POINT.

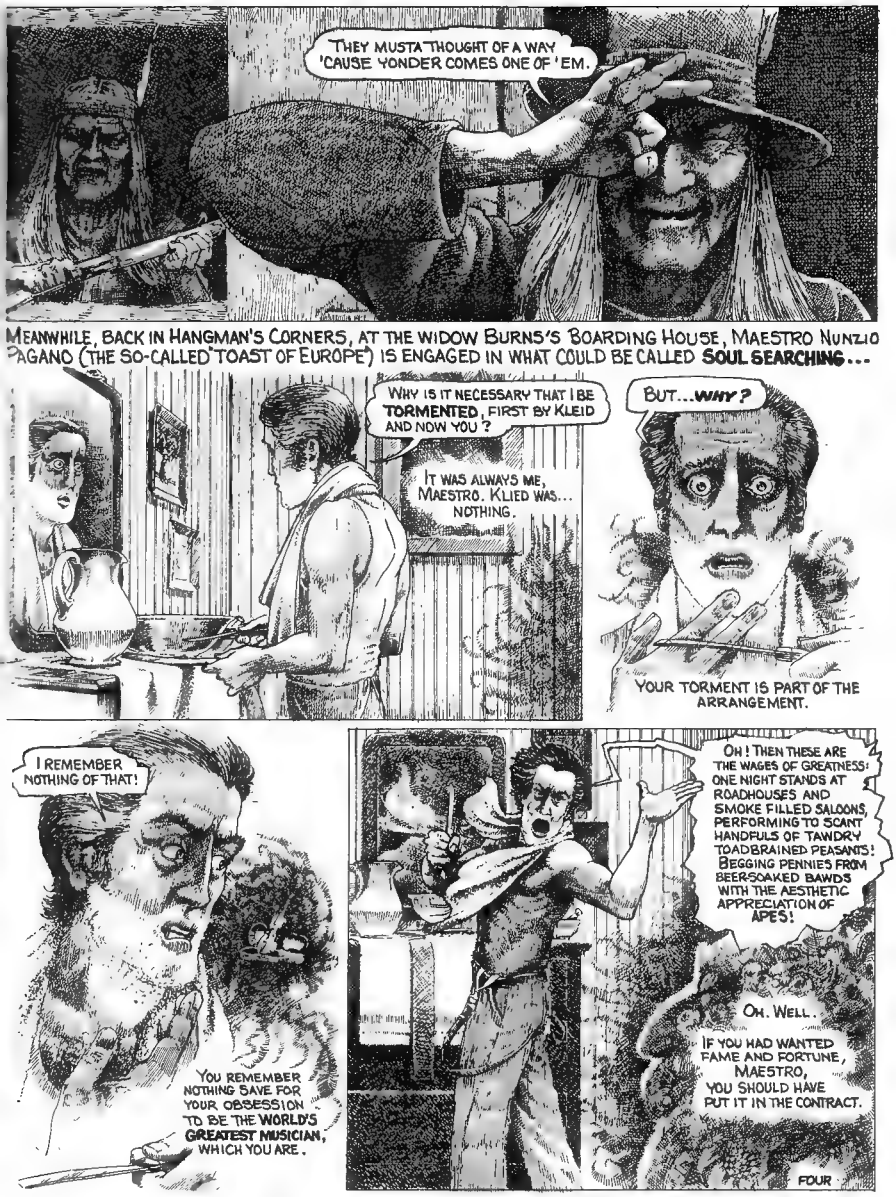

WULL...T'CRAZY OL' INJUNS MAYBE EVERTHIN'S WEIRD VARMINTS.
'CLUDIN' US!


IN ALL TH' YEARS I BIN KNOWIN' L'PORCQUE, THAT'S 'BOUT TH' CLOSEST HE'S COME T' SMART.
HMM.

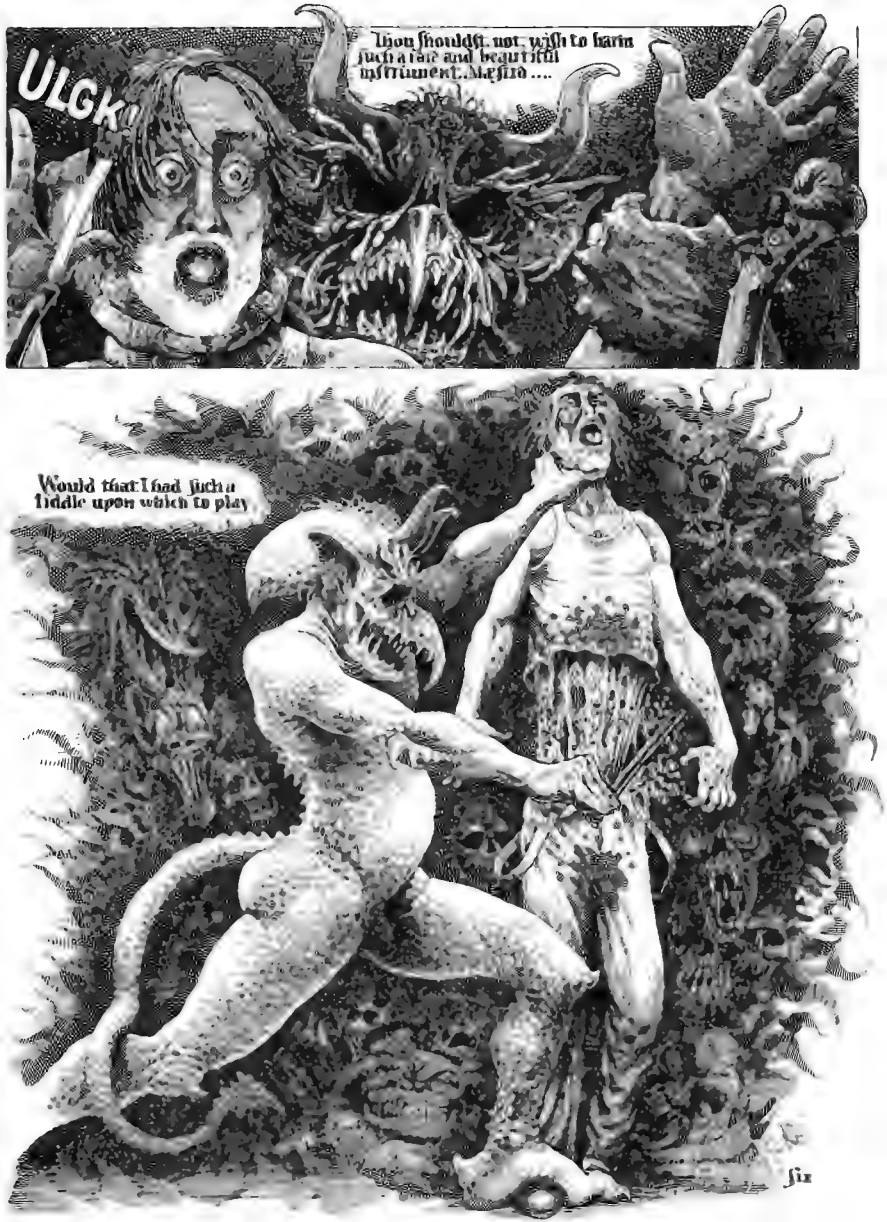

HEY! I GAH'DEES IDEA! WE BLOW A HOLE THROUGH ONE OF 'EM'S HAID, THEN WE ASK DE OTHER ONE ALL DE QUESHUNS WE WAN' TO.

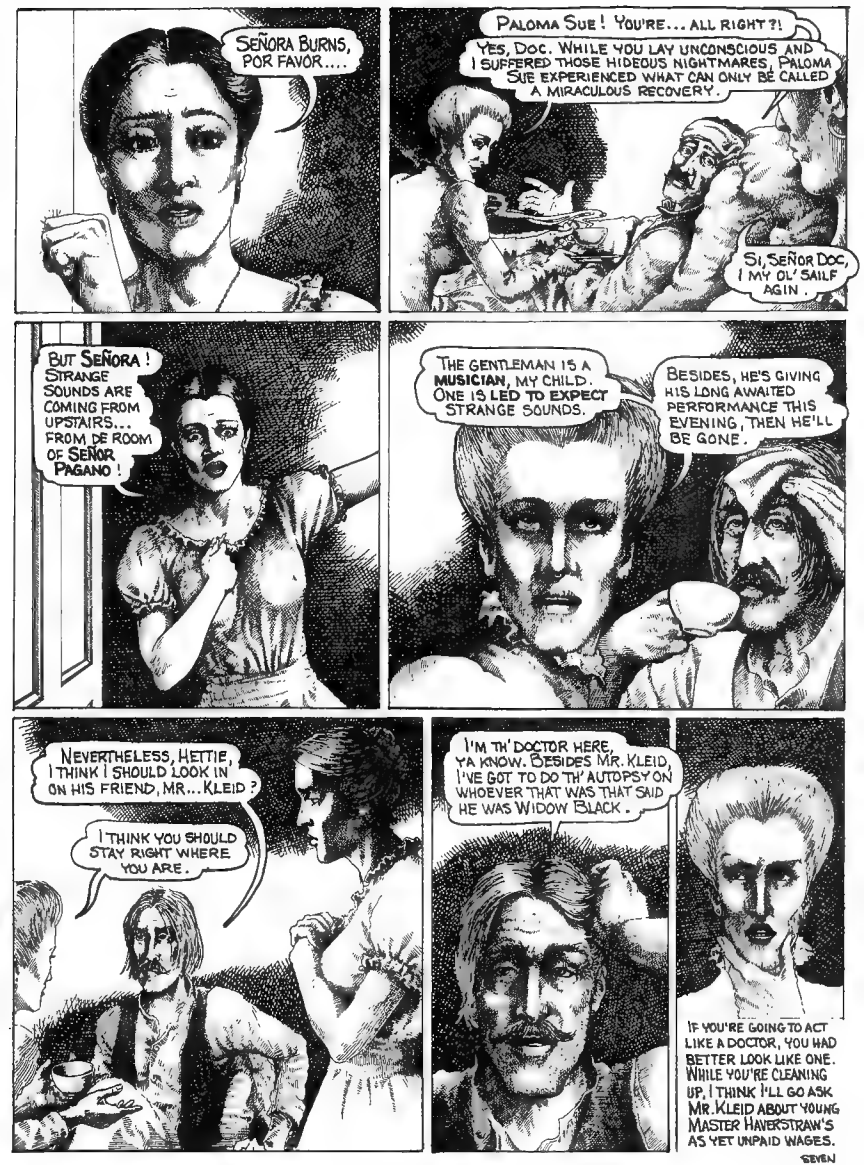


Y'ALL GIT SUMP'M FIGGERED OUT! I GOT A SPOILIN' CADAVER AN' ABOUT THREE HUNNERD BUZZARDS ON MY BACK!
EEF YOU DON'T SHUT UP ABOU' DAT CORPSE, I GONNA FEED YOU DE FUCKEEN' TING!
ALL RIGHT. OKAY. WE'RE ALL OF US A LITTLE TIRED, SO LET'S JUST FIND THEM TWO LI'L VARMINTS, WRAP THIS THING UP AN' GET BACK T'TH' COMFERT OF OUR OWN HOMES 'R WHATEVER.
SHERIFF, I THINK I'VE GOT IT.
THAT'S A HELLUVA LOTTA PALAVER, HILL OF MANY BEANS. WHATTAYA THINK IT'S ALL ABOUT?
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO, DUKE. THEY GOT SUMTHIN' THEY WANTA ASK US AND THEY'RE TRYIN' T'FIGGER OUT HOW.
THREE


THEY MUSTA THOUGHT OF A WAY 'CAUSE YONDER COMES ONE OF 'EM.
MEANWHILE, BACK IN HANGMAN'S CORNERS, AT THE WIDOW BURNS'S BOARDING HOUSE, MAESTRO NUNZIO PAGANO (THE SO-CALLED TOAST OF EUROPE) IS ENGAGED IN WHAT COULD BE CALLED SOUL SEARCHING...
WHY IS IT NECESSARY THAT I BE TORMENTED, FIRST BY KLEID AND NOW YOU?
IT WAS ALWAYS ME, MAESTRO. KLIED WAS... NOTHING.
BUT...WHY?
YOUR TORMENT IS PART OF THE ARRANGEMENT.
I REMEMBER NOTHING OF THAT!
YOU REMEMBER NOTHING SAVE FOR YOUR OBSESSION TO BE THE WORLD'S GREATEST MUSICIAN, WHICH YOU ARE.
OH! THEN THESE ARE THE WAGES OF GREATNESS! ONE NIGHT STANDS AT ROADHOUSES AND SMOKE FILLED SALOONS, PERFORMING TO SCANT HANDFULS OF TAWDRY TOADBRAINED PEASANTS! BEGGING PENNIES FROM BEER-SOAKED BAWDS WITH THE AESTHETIC APPRECIATION OF APES!
OH. WELL.
IF YOU HAD WANTED FAME AND FORTUNE, MAESTRO, YOU SHOULD HAVE PUT IT IN THE CONTRACT.

THE CONTRACT... HM, YES, YOUR OBSCENE JOKE. AND EVEN GOD, I READ SOMEWHERE - WAS IT PLATO? - "EVEN GOD CANNOT CHANGE THE PAST." WHAT IS DONE, IS DONE...
WHAT IS SIGNED, IS SIGNED. IN BLOOD.
AND YET, EVEN THE LEAST OF US - AMONG WHOSE NUMBER I COUNT MYSELF - HAS A SAY IN THE DIRECTION THE FUTURE WILL TAKE WE HOLD THE FATE OF OTHERS, AND OURSELVES IN OUR HANDS.
I BELIEVE, MAESTRO, THAT YOU KNOW THE TORTURED LIFE YOU LEAD IS MERELY A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR THAT WHICH WILL COME HEREAFTER.
AND, WHILE OTHERS OF YOUR LOWLY ILK MAY CLING TO A SHRED OF FREE WILL, YOU WILL REMAIN OUR PLAYTHING TO TORMENT UNTIL THE END OF TIME.
ARGH!
Eve


ULGK!
Thou shouldst not wish to harm such a fair and beautiful instrument, Marsyas ....
Would that I had such a fiddle upon which to play
Six


SEÑORA BURNS, POR FAVOR....
PALOMA SUE! YOU'RE... ALL RIGHT?!
YES, DOC. WHILE YOU LAY UNCONSCIOUS AND I SUFFERED THOSE HIDEOUS NIGHTMARES, PALOMA SUE EXPERIENCED WHAT CAN ONLY BE CALLED A MIRACULOUS RECOVERY.
SI, SEÑOR DOC, I MY OL' SAILF AGIN.
BUT SEÑORA! STRANGE SOUNDS ARE COMING FROM UPSTAIRS... FROM DE ROOM OF SEÑOR PAGANO!
THE GENTLEMAN IS A MUSICIAN, MY CHILD. ONE IS LED TO EXPECT STRANGE SOUNDS.
BESIDES, HE'S GIVING HIS LONG AWAITED PERFORMANCE THIS EVENING, THEN HE'LL BE GONE.
NEVERTHELESS, HETTIE, I THINK I SHOULD LOOK IN ON HIS FRIEND, MR... KLEID?
I THINK YOU SHOULD STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE.
I'M TH' DOCTOR HERE, YA KNOW. BESIDES MR. KLEID, I'VE GOT TO DO TH' AUTOPSY ON WHOEVER THAT WAS THAT SAID HE WAS WIDOW BLACK.
IF YOU'RE GOING TO ACT LIKE A DOCTOR, YOU HAD BETTER LOOK LIKE ONE. WHILE YOU'RE CLEANING UP, I THINK I'LL GO ASK MR. KLEID ABOUT YOUNG MASTER HAVERSTRAW'S AS YET UNPAID WAGES.
SEVEN

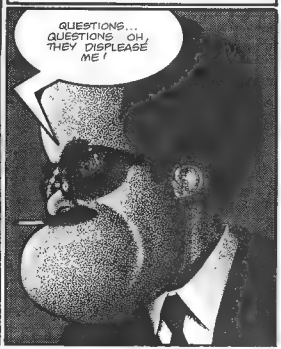
AH, MR. PAGANO! GOOD MORNING. I WAS JUST ON MY WAY UPSTAIRS TO SEE ABOUT MR. KLEID.
I HOPE HE IS FEELING BETTER.
GOOD MORNING, SIGNORA. I HOPE I AM NOT TOO LATE TO PARTAKE OF YOUR EXCELLENT BREAKFAST.
AS A MATTER OF FACT, YOU ARE. HOWEVER, DOLORES, IN THE KITCHEN, WILL FIX YOU SOMETHING.
NOW...ABOUT MR. KLEID...
KLEID?! KLEID IS... HE'S GONE.
WHA..!
HE'S GONE ON TO ANOTHER TOWN, TO MAKE ARRANGENTS FOR THE NEXT CONCERT.
OH?! WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY HE OWES TO YOUNG BENJAMIN HAVERSTRAW, A SWEET, HARD WORKING CHILD OF POVERTY?!
I HAVE MONEY...SOME MONEY. TELL THE BOY TO BRING ME AN ACCOUNTING AND I WILL PAY IT IN FULL.
THANK YOU, MR PAGANO. HIS FAMILY SORELY NEEDS IT.
THERE IS SOMETHING I NEED, SIGNORA. I MUST FIND A PLACE TO PRACTICE BEFORE TONIGHT'S PERFORMANCE.
OF COURSE! YOU MAY USE THE SCHOOLHOUSE. THE CHILDREN ARE ON HOLIDAY SO YOU WILL HAVE PRIVACY.
SEÑORA BURNS...?
MEANWHILE, MANY MILES TO THE WEST...
SO, YER GONNA, LIKE, TUNE IN AN' WATCH 'TH' FIDDLE CONCERT ON THIS THING?
NAH! TH' RECEPTION'S TERRIBLE! LOOK AT ALL THAT SNOW! NO, WE'RE GONNA RIDE OVER THERE AND WE'D BE TICKLED IF Y'ALL'D JOIN US.
WILL HERP AND SWEAZ FIND THEIR WAY OUT OF THE OLD WEST? WILL THE HAVERSTRAW KID GET HIS MONEY? WILL THE SHERIFF AND HIS SEARCH PARTY AMOUNT TO A HILL OF BEANS? AND, FINALLY, WILL TEX ARCANA MEET THE TOAST OF EUROPE? FIND OUT THE ANSWER TO THESE AND EVERY OTHER QUESTION NEXT MONTH IN THE EPISODE THAT READERS, EDITORS AND I HAVE SO LONG AWAITED...
THE CONCLUSION!

HM's HOLLYWOOD HELL

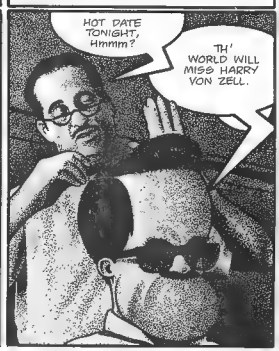
BY DREW FRIEDMAN ©1985

THE LORD OF ELTINGVILLE HAS THE ANSWERS

NOT EVEN THE LORD OF ELTINGVILLE KNOWS ALL THE ANSWERS.



YET MANKIND HAS TAKEN IT UPON ITSELF TO SEEK OUT HIS KNOWLEDGE



IN THE BACK ROOM OF THE SILVER NICKEL LOUNGE IN DOWNTOWN L.A., THE LORD ENJOYS THE SERVICES OF WANTON SLUTS

LEMME JUST UNBUTTON YOUR SHIRT AND GET A TASTE OF YOUR MANLINESS. OKAY??
BRING ME A PEZ DISPENSER WITH THE FACE OF MORTY GUNTY.
TELE-PHONE, LORD.

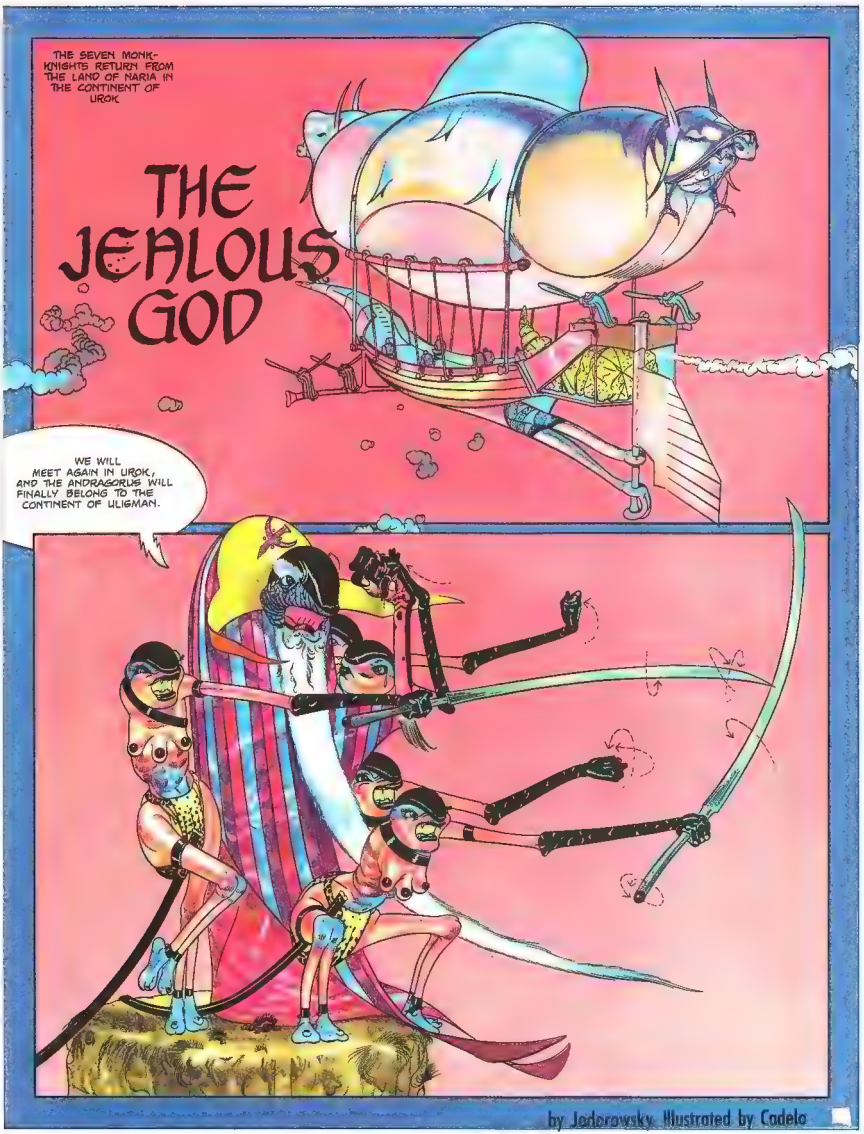
THE GOVERNMENT CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF INTERNATIONAL INTRIGUE HAS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ENGAGE THE LORD'S VALUABLE SERVICES

THE COUNTRY, SENSING THE WORST, BEGINS TO SPECULATE ON WHAT THIS MEETING IS ALL ABOUT

THE LORD MEETS FACE TO FACE WITH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE C.I.A

THE LORD GOES BEFORE THE MEDIA TO ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE UPON HIM

END


THE SEVEN MONK-KNIGHTS RETURN FROM THE LAND OF NARIA IN THE CONTINENT OF UROK
THE JEALOUS GOD
WE WILL MEET AGAIN IN UROK, AND THE ANDRAGORUS WILL FINALLY BELONG TO THE CONTINENT OF ULIGMAN.
by Jodorowsky. Illustrated by Cadelo

A CARAVAN COMING FROM NARIA CROSSES THE MOUNTAINS EN ROUTE TO MALDICCIA, THE RELIGIOUS STATE CAPITAL OF THE CONTINENT OF UROK.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

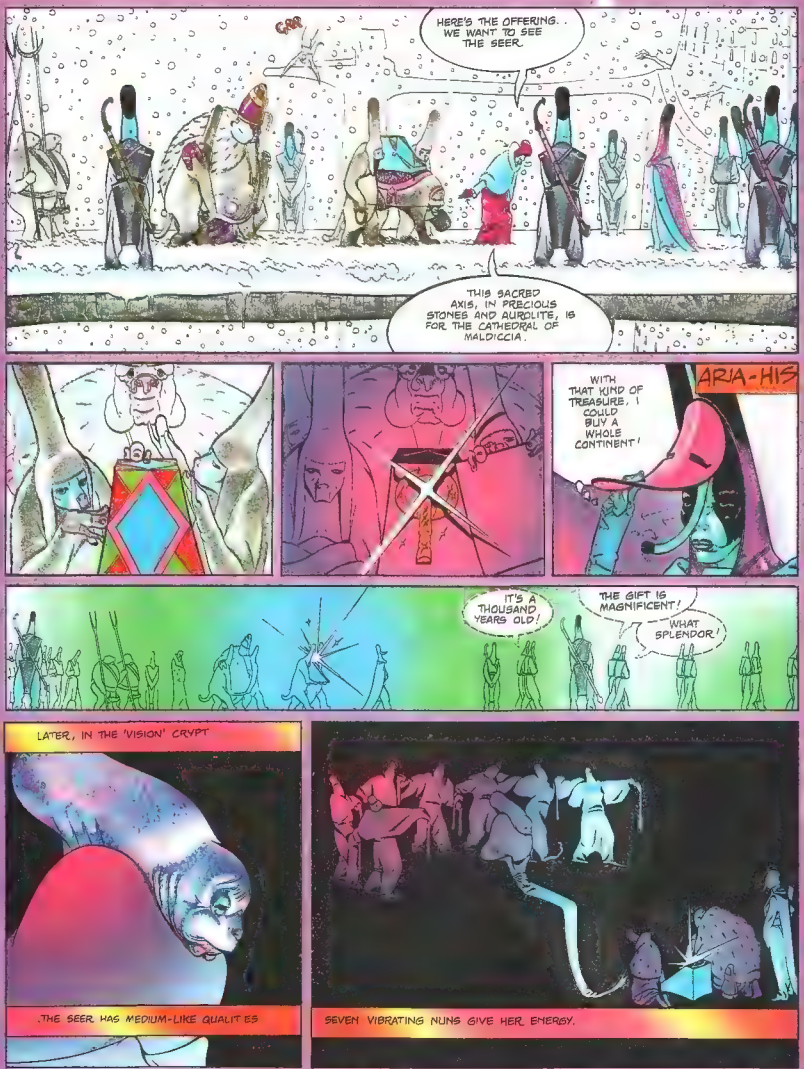
I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT I, THE GREAT SUMO THE IXTH HAVE TO CLIMB UP THESE STEEP ROCKS, UNTIL MY ASS ACHES...

PLEASE BE PATIENT, YOUR HOLINESS THE SEER CANNOT COME OUT OF HER CONVENT. SHE'S MUCH TOO OLD, SHE'D DIE.

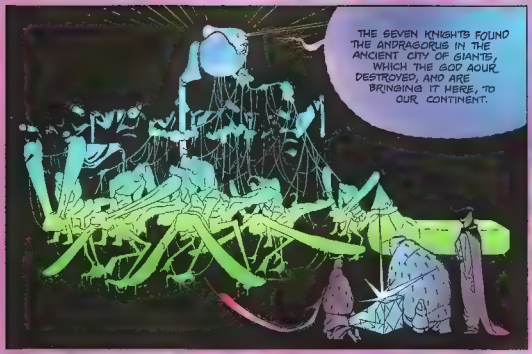
LET'S NOT BE DISCOURAGED. SHE IS THE GREATEST MIND OF OUR CONTINENT AND THE FUTURE OF OUR RELIGION DEPENDS UPON HER REVELATIONS GIVE ME A SIP OF AOUR'S BLOOD AND PLEASE EXCUSE MY IMPATIENCE, CARDINAL KUK ACHAH.

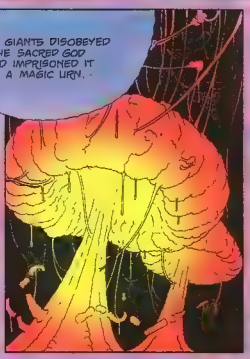
I... FORGIVE THIS VENIAL SIN

THE CARAVAN REACHES THE INACCESSIBLE CONVENT AND TAKES THE ELEVATOR.
HNGR
BE CAREFUL! HE'S VERY NASTY TODAY.
HE BECOMES MORE JEALOUS EVERY DAY
HNGRRR
HE CANNOT STAND THE SMELL OF OTHER MALES.
WAKE UP, YOU OLD FART!
H?
UH WHAT'S THAT?
WELCOME, O FATHER OF OUR SOULS.
WE'VE ARRIVED YOUR HOLINESS.. THE GIFT.


GRR
HERE'S THE OFFERING. . WE WANT TO SEE THE SEER.
THIS SACRED AXIS, IN PRECIOUS STONES AND AUROLITE, IS FOR THE CATHEDRAL OF MALDICCIA.
ARIA-HIS
WITH THAT KIND OF TREASURE, I COULD BUY A WHOLE CONTINENT!
IT'S A THOUSAND YEARS OLD!
THE GIFT IS MAGNIFICENT!
WHAT SPLENDOR!
LATER, IN THE 'VISION' CRYPT
.THE SEER HAS MEDIUM-LIKE QUALITIES
SEVEN VIBRATING NUNS GIVE HER ENERGY.

FOR THE LAST 900 YEARS, THE RULERS OF THE CONTINENTS HAVE GIVEN HER PRECIOUS OFFERINGS IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SLIMY IMAGES OF THE TRUTH THEY WERE SEEKING


THE SEVEN KNIGHTS FOUND THE ANDRAGORUS IN THE ANCIENT CITY OF GIANTS, WHICH THE GOD AOUR DESTROYED, AND ARE BRINGING IT HERE, TO OUR CONTINENT.



THE VISIONARY ENERGY LASTS ONLY A FEW MINUTES.
BUT, WHERE IS THE ANDRAGORUS?..
I'M ..
LATER, THAT NIGHT, MULA D'ARASS' ANDROGINOUS WARRIORS ..
AAAA

LATER...
THE SEER SAYS THAT THEY WILL TRY TO HIDE THE ANDRAGORUS IN THE FLOODED WOOD. WE HAVE TO HURRY AND GET THERE BEFORE SUMO AND HIS WARRIOR-NUNS.
THE SEVEN MONK-KNIGHTS.
QUICK! LET'S HIDE IT BEHIND THE WATERFALL.
LET'S ATTACK THEM!
HOW CAN WE? THANKS TO THE ANDRAGORUS, THE MONKS ARE INVINCIBLE.
THE WATER LOOKS DIFFERENT, LOOK!
THE ICE-FIRE! THE ICE-FIRE!

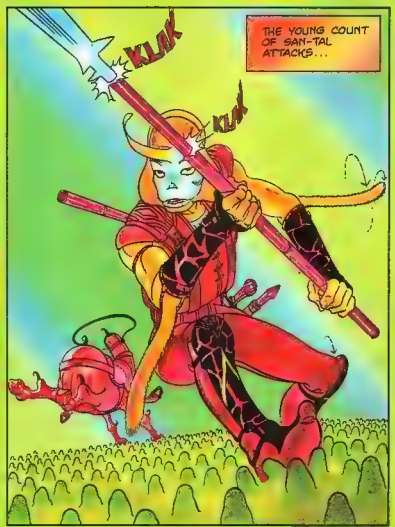
AOUR, MY GOD, WILL SAVE ME FROM THE FLAMES.
AHHHH... MY FACE!
YOUR FAITH ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH! LOOK AT ME, HIGNE!
TAKEN BY SURPRISE, FIVE OF THE SEVEN KNIGHTS ARE KILLED.
AHHH... THANKS TO THE POWER OF THE ANDRAGORUS, WE WILL REIGN OVER THE FIVE CONTINENTS! RAM-ALDAR, THE PROPHET, WILL DEPOSE AOUR, THE GOD!
BUT...
. . FIVE ARROWS MORE.
NO... NO... THIS IS NOT THE MOMENT TO DIE... BY THE PROPHET... I WILL COME BACK...

A YEAR HAS GONE BY. A GROUP OF NOBLEMEN THROW THEMSELVES IN HOT PURSUIT OF THEIR PREY, IN THE MIDST OF THE FLOWERING FIELDS.
LEADING THE GROUP ARE THE COUNTS OF SAN-TAL, ALANDOR AND HIS BROTHER, ORS FER.
I'LL BEAT YOU, ALANDOR!
ORS FER THINKS HE'S THE STRONGEST, BUT I KNOW THAT I WILL CAPTURE THE PREY BEFORE HIM.
YUH!
KUW KAW KI
TRA TRA TRA
TRAH FRA TRA TRA TRA FRA
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING US, TIRIL? YOU KNOW THAT YOU'RE TOO YOUNG TO COME WITH US.
BUT I'M ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD, AND I'M HUNGRY. I HAVE TO WORK, OTHERWISE I'LL HAVE NO FOOD.
THIS WAY!
THIS WAY!
I'M STRONGER THAN YOU ARE, AND I WILL KILL THE GRABOR. YOU WILL EAT IT AT YOUR WEDDING FEAST, WHEN YOU MARRY A WOMAN YOU DO NOT DESERVE. VANESSA SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE.
DON'T BE JEALOUS, BROTHER. YOU'RE ILLEGITIMATE! I AM THE COUNT OF SAN-TAL, SO YOU HAVE TO OBEY THE LAWS. I WILL BEAT YOU, WHATEVER YOU SAY.

TIRIL FOLLOWS THE HUNTERS WITHOUT THEIR KNOWING IT.
BUT HE SLIPS AND..
..FALLS NEAR A NEST OF BABY GRABORS.
KAW KAW KAW K
POOR LITTLE ONES! I HAVE TO SAVE THEM FROM THE CANUS.

A GIANT GRABOR! I HAVE NEVER SEEN ONE SO BIG!
KIIIHHHHHH

GRABORS ARE VERY GENTLE ANIMALS, BUT NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO GO NEAR THEIR SOURCE.
KRIIIHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

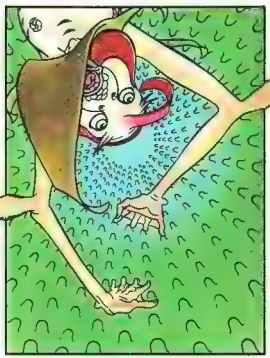

THE YOUNG COUNT OF SAN-TAL ATTACKS...
KLAK
KLAK

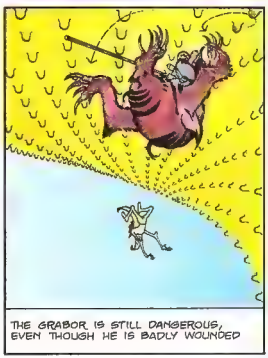
GRABOKRRR

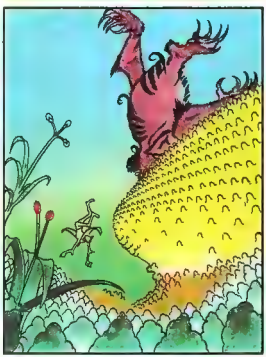
ALANDOR HAS WOUNDED THE BEAST, WHO RUNS AWAY IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.
NOBODY WILL FIND YOU HERE!
IT MUST BE THE MOTHER. SHE'LL THINK THAT I WANTED TO KILL THEM 'I'M DONE FOR.'

THE WEBBED HAND

THEY FALL INTO THE ABYSS

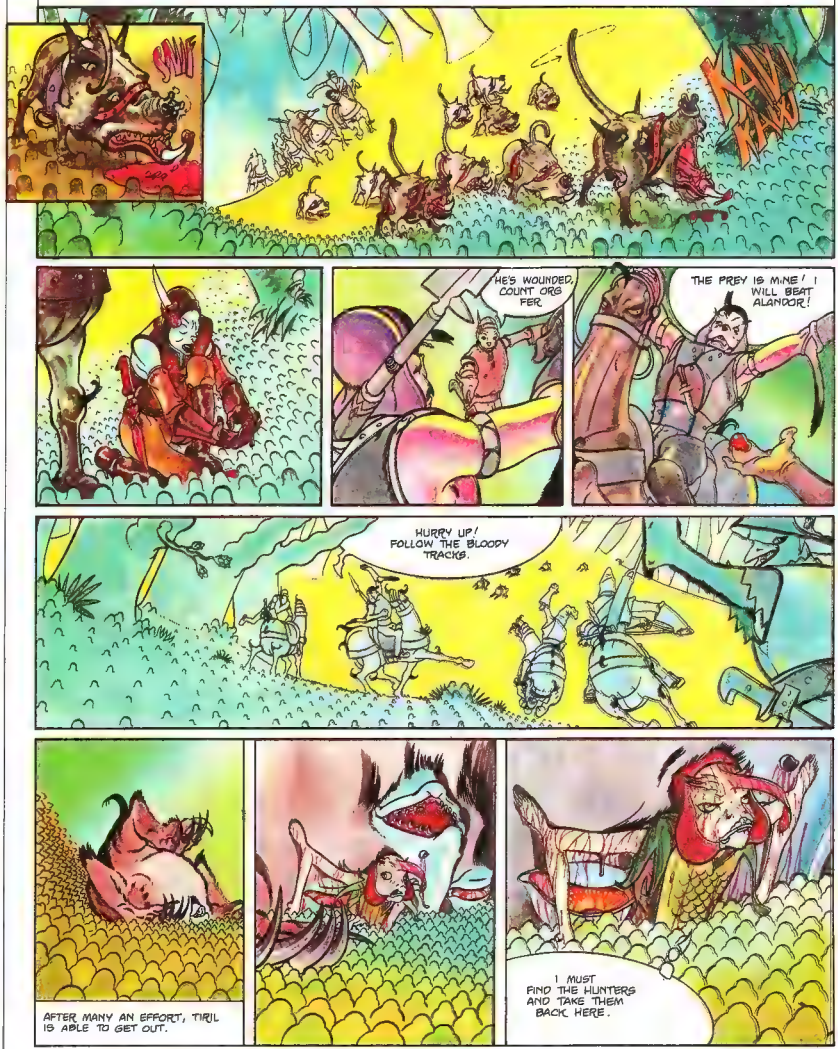



THE GRABOR IS STILL DANGEROUS, EVEN THOUGH HE IS BADLY WOUNDED

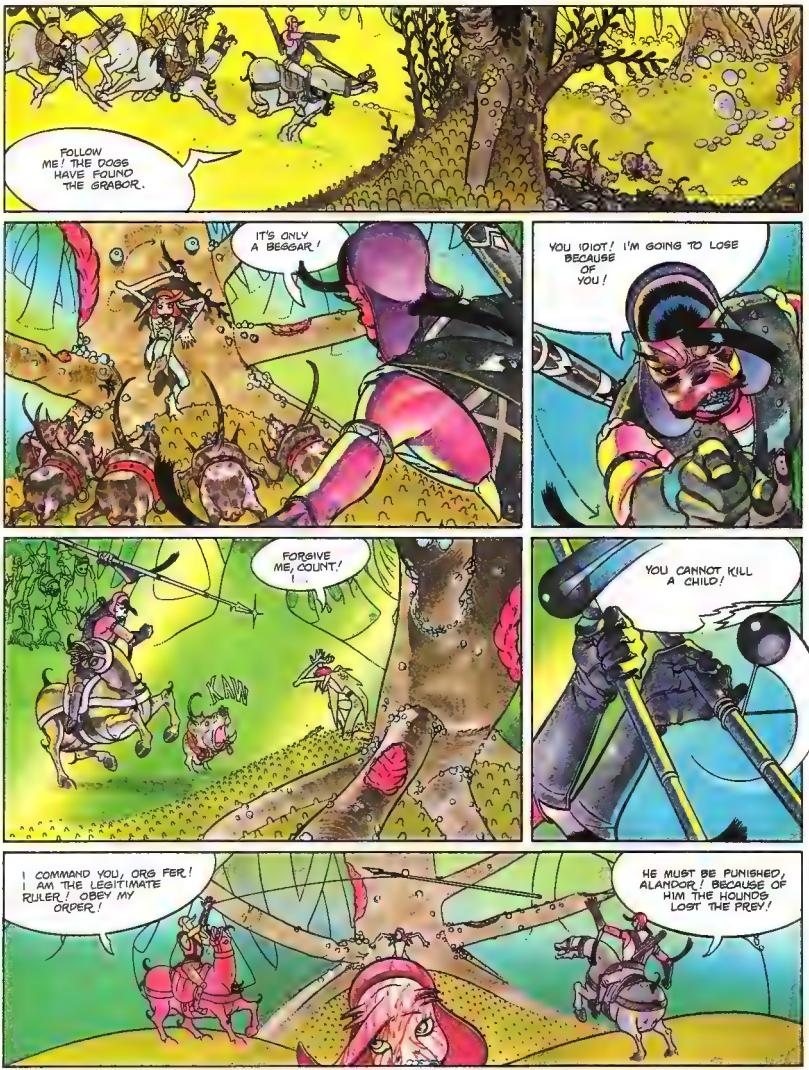


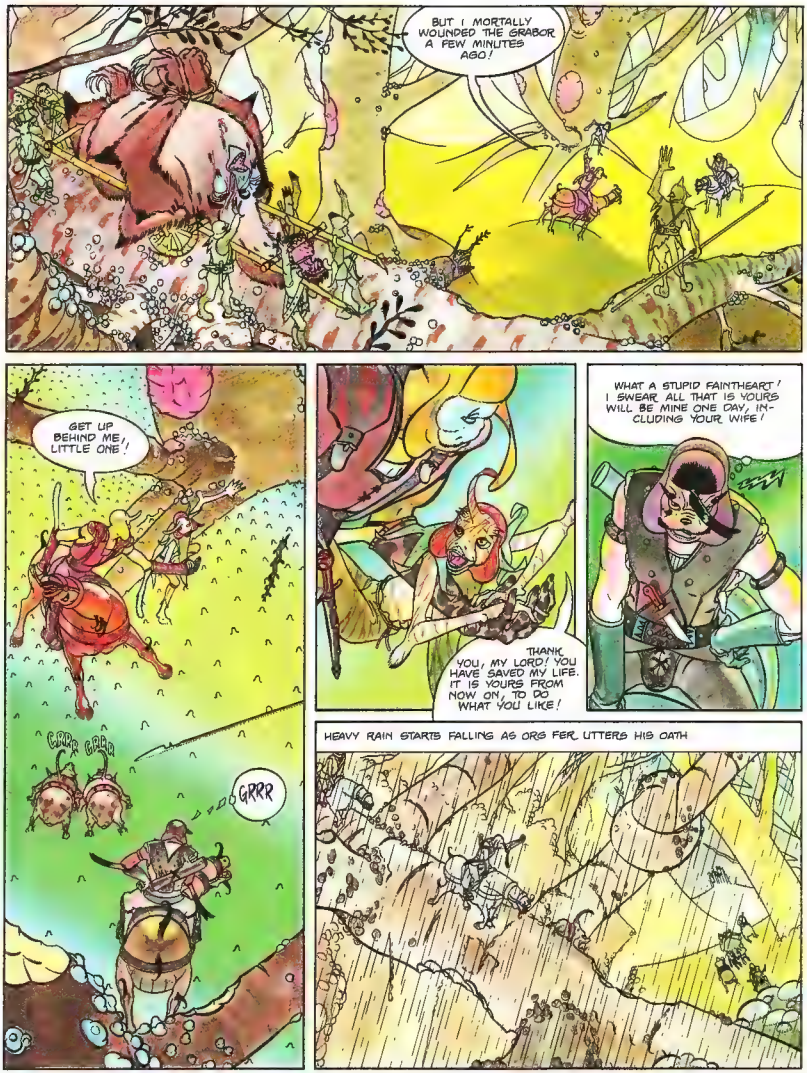
I HAVE NO WAY OF ESCAPING!
I'M SINKING!
TIRIL FALLS DOWN A TIGHT PASSAGE WHOSE MOUTH IS BLOCKED BY THE GIANT GRABOR.
THANK YOU, AOUR! THE GRABOR IS DEAD AND I AM SAFE!
TIRIL GETS A SOAKING IN THE ANIMAL'S BLOOD.

THE BAYING HOUNDS HAVE DISCOVERED THE GRABOR'S TRACKS.


KAW KAW
HE'S WOUNDED, COUNT ORS FER.
THE PREY IS MINE ! I WILL BEAT ALAMDOR!
HURRY UP! FOLLOW THE BLOODY TRACKS.
AFTER MANY AN EFFORT, TIRIL IS ABLE TO GET OUT.
I MUST FIND THE HUNTERS AND TAKE THEM BACK HERE.

Ptueeee
TRACES OF BLOOD.
THIS WAY! THIS WAY!
KAW
KAW
KAW
KAW
KAW
KAW
HEAVENS! THIS IS HORRIBLE! THE DOGS SMELL THE BLOOD ALL OVER ME AND THINK I'M THE PREY.


FOLLOW ME! THE DOGS HAVE FOUND THE GRABOR.
IT'S ONLY A BEGGAR!
YOU IDIOT! I'M GOING TO LOSE BECAUSE OF YOU!
FORGIVE ME, COUNT!
KAAR
YOU CANNOT KILL A CHILD!
I COMMAND YOU, ORG FER! I AM THE LEGITIMATE RULER! OBEY MY ORDER!
HE MUST BE PUNISHED, ALANDOR! BECAUSE OF HIM THE HOUNDS LOST THE PREY!


BUT I MORTALLY WOUNDED THE GRABOR A FEW MINUTES AGO!
GET UP BEHIND ME, LITTLE ONE!
GRRR
THANK YOU, MY LORD! YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE. IT IS YOURS FROM NOW ON, TO DO WHAT YOU LIKE!
WHAT A STUPID FAINTHEART! I SWEAR ALL THAT IS YOURS WILL BE MINE ONE DAY, INCLUDING YOUR WIFE!
HEAVY RAIN STARTS FALLING AS ORG FER UTTERS HIS OATH

THE NEXT DAY...

THE LAST TWO NAVIGATORS, OLIBO AND IGNE, FOLLOW THE TRACK OF THE ANDRAGORUS, THANKS TO THEIR MAGNETIC ANIMAL/PENDULUMS.

LET'S WAIT UNTIL THE CARAVAN OF SAN TAL'S NEW WIFE HAS GONE BY.

I WILL HAVE MONEY, NOBILITY, ALL SORTS OF POSSESSIONS... WHAT BOTHERS ME FATHER, IS THAT I DON'T LIKE ALANDOR.

DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU! BEING RICH ISN'T EVERYTHING, BUT IF YOU'RE NOT RICH, YOU'RE BOUND NOT TO BE HAPPY.

YOU MUST MAKE THIS SMALL SACRIFICE FOR FUTURE HAPPINESS, MY DEAR.

A SQUADRON OF FANATIC INGHINGS LET THE CARAVAN GO BY WITHOUT ATTACKING IT.

LATER, WHEN ALL IS SETTLED, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO CHOOSE A MAN WHO WILL REALLY PLEASE YOU! BUT KEEP IT SECRET!

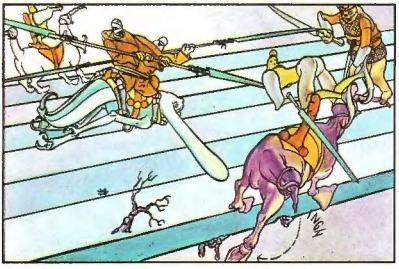
NOBODY MUST SEE US. THIS CONTINENT IS INHABITED BY FILTHY BELIEVERS.

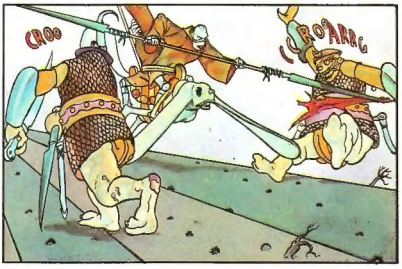
INGH!

GIVE THE THREE WISE MEN SOMETHING TO DRINK. THEY MUSTN'T STOP THINKING.

ARIA-HIS IS WAITING IN HIS CASTLE MADE OF LEPROUS STONES.

THAT THIEF HAS MADE A DEAL WITH THOSE FANATICS FROM THE OTHER CONTINENTS. SUMO IX'S RIGHT HAND AIDE, CARDINAL KUK IS WITH THEM. AOUR HAS BEEN BETRAYED!
IF THEY REALLY HAVE THE ANDRAGORUS, THEY WILL INVADE AND ANNIHILATE US.
THE ANDRAGORUS WILL HELP US ELIMINATE ALL THE FALSE GODS.
LET'S ATTACK THEM.





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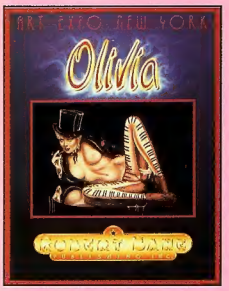

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